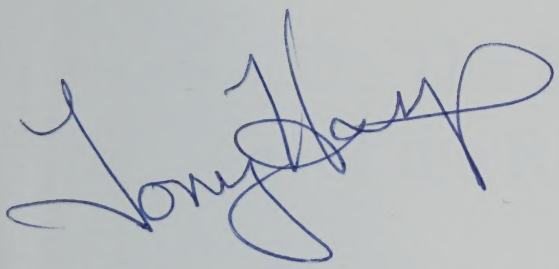
ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER

A HISTORY OF HARDIN COUNTY, TENNESSEE

BY

TONY HAYS


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On The Banks of the River:

A History of Hardin County, Tennessee

by

Tony Hays

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On the Banks of the River:

A History of Hardin County, Tennessee

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Tony Hays

The Tennessee River Museum

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Preface

It's early morning in Kuwait. In just a few minutes, the prayer call will sound, blasting out from the loudspeakers at the mosque next door. Writing a history of Hardin County here, two blocks from the Persian Gulf, is at best an odd experience. Iraq lies less than a hundred miles to the north. As I write this, Iran, just across the Gulf, has tested new sea-based Cruise missiles. Hardly a month goes by that there isn't another invasion scare. Ernest Hemingway always believed that in order to write about a place, you had to leave that place. I guess I've accomplished that. I'm about as far away from Hardin County as I can get.

People drive history. And people have driven this history. Henry Williams, Jim Dan Taylor,, Ronney Brewington, Mary Elizabeth Hitchcock, Dr. Robert Corlew, Dr. Frank B. Williams, Dr. Calvin Dickinson, the late Vernon Plunk, John Welch, the late Morgan Ross, Elva Stricklin, Mamie Crotts, and the late Grace Patterson all pushed this book into being. Deserving of special mention are John and Harriet Ross, who because of our mutual love of history have become not only good friends, but instrumental actors in putting this book together. My uncle, the late Roy D. Welch, let me drag him all over Hardin County as I tried to put the pieces in place. He and his wife, Mary Wolfe Welch, have been second parents to me.

I would be totally remiss if I didn't mention the people here in Kuwait who have been so supportive: Stephen Fitzpatrick and Quentin Murphy, and Warrant Officer Saad Turky Al-Dossari of the Kuwait Air Force. And, of course, my friends at the British School of

Kuwait: Hazel Wright, Nigel Garwell, and Bridget Sharkey. Last, but absolutely not least, Kuwait wouldn't be the same without my dear friend, Sergei Ichtchenko, Consul for the Federation of Russian Republics, who helps make life bearable here.

A special thanks goes to Kent Collier and the Tennessee River Museum as well as Herbert Harper and the Tennessee Historical Commission. I would also like to thank my two finest mentors and friends, Dr. James A. Grimshaw Jr. and Dr. Richard Tuerk.

Finally, were it not for Jim Thompson at the *Savannah Courier*, this work simply would not be. Over ten years ago, he took a chance on an untried author with a fire in his belly. I hope his risk hasn't gone unrewarded.

The people have been called to prayer, a time for reflection. And it is now time to move this book forward. I hope you enjoy it.

Salmiyah, Kuwait
February 1, 1996

For my mother,
Charlyne Welch Hays
1916 - 1991

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Introduction

On an early summer morning, you can stand on the banks of the Tennessee River and watch the fog rise from the glistening water and hang over the surface like a ghostly blanket. The streams flows north out of Alabama here, and its coursing waters wind between tree-covered hills and flat river bottoms, marking its path with backwashes and silent pools guarded by stands of cedars, pines, walnuts, and maples. The Tennessee, its origins lost in a time long past, has left its mark on the course of human affairs as well, witness to those constants--birth and death, in all their varied forms.

This is Hardin County, commanded by the mighty Tennessee River. For hundreds of years the fortunes of this primeval area have risen and fallen with the river. The southern boundary of Hardin is approximately twenty-three miles long and almost evenly split between Alabama and Mississippi. Wayne County rests on its eastern line; McNairy lies on the west. To the north lie Decatur, Henderson, and Chester counties.

The Tennessee River dominates the area and has served as the most significant geographic influence on the county's history. Not only does the river split the county in half by landmass, it divides the hilly eastern portion--a part of the Highland Rim--from the flat, river bottoms of the Western Valley. About 140 square miles of land lie in the Tennessee River bottom, and those same flatlands stand approximately 370 feet above sea level.

A myriad of streams course through the hills and

hollows on their way to supply the river. Among the major waterways on the eastern side are Horse and Indian. Horse Creek was originally known as Swift. Local folklorists maintain that the name was changed in recognition of horse thieves who once frequented its banks.[1] Stretching from the hills of western Wayne County, Horse Creek runs east to west for the first third of its length. It is fed along the way by Germany Branch and Rogers Creek. About four miles east of the Tennessee River, Horse Creek curves north, running parallel to the river until it enters just outside of Cerro Gordo.

Indian Creek is another major waterway in the northeast sector of the county. This stream also has its origins in Wayne County, after which it winds through Olive Hill on its way to the Tennessee River, east and across the river from Saltillo. According to tradition the creek received its name from a band of Native Americans who once made its home along the stream. Foremost among Indian Creeks' feeder-streams are Smith's Fork and Flat Gap Branch. Smith's Fork runs southeast from near the Crossroads community to a point several miles south of Highway 64. Flat Gap Branch strays off near Olive Hill and flows due east.

Other streams on the east side of the river include Hardin's Creek in the northeast; Turkey Creek in the center; and Holland's Creek in the southeast. White's Creek and Dry Creek finish out the major elements of the eastern drainage system. Numerous branches of these creeks line the countryside and split the hills.

On the west side of the river, although the terrain is

much more level, an equally complex system of streams crisscross the landscape. In the northwest is the sizable White Oak Creek with its own fairly large drainage basin. The stream empties into the Tennessee River just south of Saltillo. Further south, running west to east, is Beason's Creek. Next come Snake Creek, Owl Creek, and Lick Creek--waterways that became well known during the Battle of Shiloh. These streams have cut deep ravines across the western half of the county, and it was along their densely-wooded banks that thousands of men lost their lives during that tragic battle.

Running through the beautiful hills on the Mississippi border is the last of the major streams, Chambers Creek. Named for an early settler in the area--John Chambers--the creek spans the southwest corner of the county.[2] Geologically, the land on the eastern side rests atop a limestone bed. This limestone is of marble quality along Flat Gap Branch. Other natural features in the east include a number of springs. The Clack Spring, the Garrard Spring on Indian Creek, the Baugus Spring on Little Turkey Creek, and Shady Grove Spring all have served Hardin countians since the arrival of the first settlers.

The Tennessee River itself holds three islands--Diamond Island, Wolf Island, and Delaney's Island. Diamond Island, the first encountered coming from the south, is named for its shape. Primarily flat, the island stands, at its highest point, 375 feet above sea level. The island is located just north of Pittsburgh Landing and the Shiloh National Battlefield and embraces approximately 98 acres.

Wolf Island lies slightly south and due west of Savannah. Like Diamond Island, Wolf Island also rises about 375 feet above sea level. According to tradition, this land mass was named for an early settler, Jacob Wolf.[3] It is comprised of some 78 acres.

The last of these land masses is Delaney's Island, also named for one of the county's early residents, Jacob Delaney. The largest of the three--132 acres--Delaney's Island lies at the point where the Tennessee River cuts back east toward Clifton.[4] All of these islands are composed rich alluvial soil deposited by the river over the course of centuries.

This, then, is Hardin County, an area defined by water and settled by man.

1. Harbert, Perry, "Early History of Hardin County," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, No. 1, 38-67.
2. Brazelton, B.G., *A History of Hardin County* (Nashville: Cumberland Presbyterian Publishing House, 1885), 88.
3. Ibid., 86.
4. Ibid.

Chapter One

The First Settlers

The history of native American settlements in Hardin County appears to have been cyclical. Signs of early native American communities exist all along the Tennessee River. Perry Harbert, B.G. Brazelton, and Judge A.A. Watson, all county historians, mention remnants of bygone cultures.

These local historians claim that the Mound Builders were the earliest of settlers in what is now Hardin County. The banks of the Tennessee River are lined with sites associated with these ancient peoples. According to Harbert, the most remarkable of these mounds is a cluster of fourteen, coincidentally, in and around present-day Savannah. Surrounded by an ancient trench, the site would appear to mark some large habitation. Limited excavation has revealed a copper wedge and eight copper pulleys which Harbert claims have been attributed to a visit by Hernando De Soto, the famous Spanish explorer.[1] A second group of mounds lie on

Middleton Creek in the upper northwest corner of the county near both Henderson County and Chester County. These points comprise, at least partially, burial mounds as human remains are said to have been found in them. The third group lies on the bluffs overlooking the Tennessee River, on ground fought over by the Union and the Confederacy during the Battle of Shiloh. Near Pittsburgh Landing rise a series of small mounds, excavated by the Smithsonian Institution and now cared for by the National Park Service.[2]

Excavations conducted by Memphis State University in 1988, prior to construction of the new post office, revealed several prehistoric artifacts. Most such items date from the Late Archaic and Middle Woodland periods and consist primarily of projectile points/knives and some ceramic artifacts. Some historic artifacts were recovered, but the bulk seem to have been from pre-settlement county history.[3]

Samuel Cole Williams, in his pioneering work *Beginnings of West Tennessee,* postulates that the pre-Columbian Mound Builders were the ancestors of the historical Chickasaw Native Americans and that warfare with northern tribes forced them to abandon their Tennessee villages and locate in northern Mississippi. This relocation created a void in the west Tennessee area, which became a favored hunting ground for native Americans.[4]

The day of the Mound Builders came to a close, and the more familiar tribes of native Americans appeared on the scene; the lands that became Hardin County were deserted as residences. Wayne County continued to

serve as a home for a number of villages. Along Indian Creek, according to local legend, the first pioneers discovered native American settlements.[5]

As time passed the habitat of the Mound Builders gave way to the hunting grounds of the Creek Nation and the Chickasaw Nation, and the first foreign explorers arrived in the area. While many explorers--De Soto, LaSalle, Father St. Cosme, and Father Gravier--passed down the Mississippi, historians have speculated that only De Soto actually visited the Hardin County area. Those early explorers remained close to the Mississippi, as a general rule, and did not spend a great deal of time venturing inland to the vast forest regions of west Tennessee.[6]

The county does not appear in English records until about 1661 when King Charles II granted a large expanse of land, including Hardin County, to Lord Clarendon.[7] Clarendon never attempted to visit the region nor make any improvements on his grant.[8]

During the 18th century, land speculators developed a growing interest in the hunting grounds of native Americans. The first group of white men to visit the Hardin County area was John Donelson's river party, on its way to meet James Robertson and colonize Nashborough. According to Donelson's journal, they stopped and spent the night at what may have been Diamond Island. The next morning, a slave overslept and was accidentally left behind. The company was forced to return and search for him, which they did successfully.[9]

By the late 1700s, surveyors were crisscrossing the

county. James, Robert, and Alex Lack registered land lying in the county in 1784. W.C. Farrar surveyed approximately 100 acres in Hardin County in 1787.[10] In time, Colonel Joseph Hardin, resident of Greene County in eastern Tennessee, received a grant in west Tennessee in recognition of his service in the American Revolution. He died before he could relocate to the county that would bear his name. Colonel Hardin's sons, Benjamin, James, and Gibson Hardin, did however travel to west Tennessee to survey their father's grant.[11]

The country was expanding. Men were ambitious and the grass seemed ever greener to the west. More and more settlers crossed the Appalachians and swept over the rolling hills of Tennessee. The Hardin family were among the earliest to make the journey.

Colonel James Hardin, son of Joseph Hardin, took the mantle of family leadership after his father's death. He organized a group of families from Greene County, Tennessee to settle his father's grant along the banks of the Tennessee River in 1816. Reminiscent of the Donelson-Robertson expedition which established Nashborough, the group split in two, one to go by land and one to brave the river.[12]

Hardin, with his brother Joseph Jr., sister Elender Thacker, John Brazelton, and their families began the long arduous overland route. The expedition headed southwest, stopping at Muscle Shoals long enough for Hardin and Brazelton to attend a conference with the Chickasaws. Because of this delay, and the primitive road conditions, the land journey was difficult and took much longer than the river route.[13]

Solomon Brazelton and John Gooden led the river party. Indications are that this expedition was fairly uneventful. They received some assistance from friendly Native Americans at the Muscle Shoals and reached their destination in July, 1816, some three weeks after departure. Legend has it that Sally Brazelton, daughter of John Brazelton, leaped from the boat onto the bank exclaiming, "I am the first white woman to set foot here."[14]

Some confusion arose initially concerning the location of the rendezvous with the land party. The plan had been to put in at the mouth of present day Horse Creek. They missed that landmark, however, and stopped instead at what would become Hardin's Creek, arriving July 15, 1816. They were soon met by James Hardin and his contingent of settlers.[15]

While the Brazelton-Gooden party is credited with being the first settlers in Hardin County, there is evidence that other emigrants had arrived earlier. According to Harbert,

> In the vicinity now called Pickwick, the white man found a rather prosperous tribe of Native Americans whose chief was called 'Strawhorn Monk.' He is said to have had large possessions of horses and other property; this lot of Native Americans was unusually friendly to the invading white man.[16]

The existence of a Native American tribe in an area previously thought to have been merely hunting grounds deserves investigation. Census and other vital records list Monk as a North Carolinian by birth.[17] He is notably absent from the 1820 census of Hardin County,

appearing for the first time in 1830.[18] Although Monk could certainly have been in the county by 1816, and it is possible that he was a Cherokee, no record of his presence in the county predates the 1830 census. The Weatherford family, descended from the famous chief Red Stick, was also said to have been in the county by 1816, and none of their county records predate 1830 either. In recent years, a descendant of Monk's has taken issue with Harbert's claim that Monk was an Native American, providing fairly conclusive evidence that Harbert was in error.[19]

Apart from the Hardins, evidence indicates that other white settlers may have arrived in the county prior to 1816. Watson and Harbert list the Welches and Pickenses as early arrivals in the southeastern sector of the county.[20] Florence, Alabama had been settled for some time, and many early settlers of the Hardin County region came through Florence and then down the river into Tennessee. The Hardin-Brazelton venture was, most probably, the first organized effort at colonization. Others, the Monks and Weatherfords included, moved into the new lands as individual families.

Within a few weeks of their arrival, the Hardin-Brazelton party began to split up. John Brazelton moved his family into the area that would become Clifton. Shortly, however, Brazelton died of fever, becoming the first white man to die in Hardin County. His grave lies near Altum Branch of Hardin's Creek.[21]

Other settlers soon followed the Hardins and Brazeltons. Between July and December of 1816, a number of families settled in the midsection of the

county. Isham, Daniel, Darling, and Eli Cherry moved from Wilson County, Tennessee into Hardin. Stephen Austin, a veteran of the Revolution, and Daniel Smith also entered the region during this period.[22] The next year, 1817, the remainder of James Hardin's brothers made the trek eastward. Gibson, Benjamin, and Robert Hardin settled in the same area as their brother. Jonathan Courtney, who was to establish one of the first manufacturing enterprises in the county, is also credited with having arrived during the first two years of settlement. Other friends and relatives of the Hardins and Brazeltons soon arrived. Lewis Broyles, a storekeeper from Greene County, set off for the Arkansas territory from Knoxville with his merchandise lashed to a flatboat. Upon reaching Hardin County, he encountered James Hardin, an old friend from east Tennessee. Intent on developing the county, Hardin persuaded Broyles to remain in Hardin County. The storekeeper set up shop and became one of the first businessmen in the county.[23]

The middle and southeastern sections of the county were quickly populated. Henry Reynolds, Jonathan R. Pickens, Samuel Harbour, David Crotts, David and James Robinson, and Jeremiah H. Pickens all settled in the Turkey Creek area. John C. Welch and his brother, Elijah C. Welch, settled on Rogers Creek at the same time as Gabriel Pickens. Hill K. Weatherford, William Wingo, and members of the Franks family also settled in the same vicinity.[24]

Identifying the first settlers on the west side of the river is somewhat more difficult. When the county

government was first organized in 1818, its territory extended all the way to Memphis. Within a few days, the bulk of this land was chopped off by the legislature, but its boundaries still encompassed a large portion of southwest Tennessee, including all or part of McNairy and Haywood counties.[25] Individuals mentioned in early county records as living west of the Tennessee River might have actually lived as far west as Hardeman.

Brazelton indicates that the Parish family, the Jones family, and Nimrod Morris were among the first settlers in west Hardin County. Martin Fraley settled in what is now the Shiloh area. Simpson Lee arrived in the area of Saltillo at a relatively early date. The Brazeltons also moved across the river during the first years.[26]

Thomas Shannon is credited with being the first settler in Saltillo, arriving there in 1822 from Nashville.[27] Shannon remained at that location until his death in 1834.[28] Perry B. and Smith Hawkins imported goods from St. Louis and opened a store at the site in 1825.[29] Perry Hawkins died prior to July, 1850 when his administrators presented a settlement of his estate.[30]

Between 1816, when the first settlers arrived, and 1820, the new residents took up all the available land in the creek and river bottoms. Except for the settlers in the northeast area, the pioneers lacked any sense of cohesiveness. This changed with the establishment of a county government.

1. Harbert, 38-39.
2. Ibid., 40.
3. Dye, David, *Phase II Archaeological Investigations at Site 40HR29 Hardin County, Tennessee,* (Memphis: Memphis State University, 1988), 31.
4. Williams, Samuel Cole, *Beginnings of West Tennessee, In the Land of the Chickasaws,* 1541-1841, (Johnson City, Tennessee: Watauga Press,1930), 5.
5. Harbert, 40.
6. Corlew, Robert, *A Short History of Tennessee* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 25-26.
7. Ibid., 28; Harbert, 40.
8. Harbert, 40.
9. Ibid., 42.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 43.
12. Brazelton, 13.
13. Harbert, 45.
14. Brazelton, 14.
15. Harbert, 45.
16. Ibid., 40.
17. U.S. Census Bureau, 1850, Hardin County, Tennessee.
18. U.S. Census Bureau, 1830, Hardin County, Tennessee.
19. Lindsey, William D., "Will the Real Strawhorn Monk Please Stand Up? Notes on the Ancestry of Strawhorn Monk" *Hardin County Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (1993): 3-18.
20. Harbert, 49.
21. Ibid., 46.
22. Ibid., 48.
23. Ibid, 47; Hitt, Andrew, *Short Life Sketches of Some Prominent Hardin Countians* (Savannah, Tennessee: Custom Productions, Inc., nd), 20.
24. Harbert, 48-49.
25. Corlew, 149.
26. Brazelton, 29.
27. Ibid.
28. Hardin County Court, *Minute Book C*, 15.
29. Brazelton, 31.
30. Hardin County Court, *Minute Book F*, 15.

Chapter Two

The County Organizes

In 1818 state legislators created Hardin County whose boundaries extended to the Chickasaw Bluffs on the Mississippi River. Andrew Jackson and his cohorts in Nashville were not prepared to see the valuable bluff city controlled from east of the Tennessee. Within a few days, Shelby County was established.[1]

Prior to the establishment of county government, many of the legal functions of the county had been handled by the Lawrence County Court of Pleas and Quarterly Sessions. The residents of Hardin County were forced to have their disputes settled at Lawrenceburg. For less litigious functions, such as marriage bonds, residents often went to Florence, Alabama, as did John Welch when he married Jane South of Wayne County.[2]

To resolve land boundary disputes, justices of the peace from Lawrence County occasionally had to travel to Hardin County. Later, of course, justices from Hardin

County had to provide similar services for citizens in present day McNairy, Hardeman, and Chester counties.

The Hardin County Court of Pleas and Quarterly Sessions was not organized until January of 1820, some three months after the county itself was formed. The first session of the court was held at Colonel James Hardin's log cabin in the vicinity of present day Cerro Gordo.[3] Among the first actions was the election of constables to enforce the law. Lewis Faulkner, a militia major, Walter Wood, Elisha Smith, James H. Steele, John G. Williams, and Shelton Smith were tabbed as Hardin County's first constables.[4]

James Hardin was chosen as the first county court clerk. Virginia native, Isham Cherry, patriarch of a large family of settlers, was selected as the first chairman of the court. Kentuckian Daniel Smith, was named sheriff. The first quorum court--that group of men whose presence was necessary for the court to do business--included Joseph McMahon, Isham Cherry, James Barnes, Samuel Harbour, and David Kincannon.[5]

With these appointments, the court was fairly well balanced geographically. Cherry and Harbour came from the central and southern portions of the county, as it then existed.[6] McMahon had settled in the north central area.[7] Barnes and Kincannon came from the northern section, above Indian Creek.[8]

In April 1820, the county established its tax base. Accordingly, retail stores, hawkers, taverns, and peddlers were taxed at the rate of five dollars a year. An eighteen and three-quarter cent tax was levied on 100 acre tracts. Thirty-seven and a half cents was collected on each lot.

The poll taxes were set as twelve and a half cents for each white and fifty cents per slave.[9]

A number of problems faced that first county court. Not only did they have the immediate environs to govern, but they were blessed, or cursed, with a wide expanse of wilderness to oversee as well. Most of their dominion had been Native American hunting grounds until two years before, when Isaac Shelby and Andrew Jackson negotiated the Chickasaw Purchase of 1818. Now, they faced a largely virgin forest crossed only with the simplest of Native American trails.

Defense was a primary concern. The act of the legislature establishing Hardin County made provisions for the organization of a militia regiment. Early court records indicate that the first militia officers were captains William Warnel, John G. Williams, one of the Jones's, Henry Mahan, James English, and one of the Paynes. Lewis Faulkner[a] was a major, probably the second-in-command.[10] Colonel James Hardin may have been the commanding officer.

Eight muster grounds were established during those first years. One site was located on the Savannah-Adamsville Road on the west side of the river. Another was established at Hardinsville. These locations were used at regular intervals to hold drill.[11]

The various companies in the regiment corresponded geographically with different areas of the county. The individual militia company (as a

[a] Brazelton and Watson spell this name Fortner, however, county records use either Falkner or Faulkner.

geographical unit) was used for a diversity of governmental functions. Tax collectors, for example, were appointed from each militia company. The list of collectors appointed at the January, 1823 term of the county court were:

Noah Lilley in Capt. Cooper's Company
Isham Cherry in Capt. Pyburn's Company
David Kincannon in Capt. Halbert's Company
Stephen Roach in Capt. Williams' Company
James Barnes in Capt. James' Company
John Kindel in Capt. Tomkins' Company
Edmund W. Gee in Capt. Warnel's Company[12]

Constables were also selected for each company. Often, the court minutes refer to a person being named as the constable in a certain area, such as in Capt. James' Company, or in a specific neighborhood. The militia company became an all-purpose type of governmental division.[13]

One of the court's first chores was to build a road system. Beginning in July of 1820, committees of jurors were appointed to survey and lay out roads. At that session of court, Samuel Bruton, Jefferson Farrar, Joseph Thrasher, John Yount, James English, Noah Lilly, John Chambers, and Martin Fraley were ordered to view and mark out a road from Chambers' house, by Samuel Bruton's ferry, to strike the Wayne County line at the spot where Horse Creek crosses that line.[14] They made their report in September of that year. Apparently this road was cut to serve the needs of the central portion of the county as it lay directly across the southern third of the settled area. Presumably, the needs of the northern

section had already been met.

This effort began a spate of road surveys, all of which seemed to begin at the mouth of Horse Creek. Several of the men from that first jury proved themselves particularly proficient in this arena. Noah Lilly, Jefferson Farrar, and Ninean Steele--who was said to be an excellent mathematician--found themselves frequently named to these committees.[15] Within a few months, a road was cut on the west side of the river from White's Ferry to the western boundary of Hardin County, headed for the Chickasaw Bluffs, the path to be laid out by Drury Middleton, John White, Isaiah White, William Gaw, John Dickson, and Nicholas Shoat.[16] One other early road survey, worthy of mention, is one made in July of 1821. That survey was to mark a road by the nearest and most direct route from James Hardin's ferry to the 10th District office on the Forked Deer River near what is now Jackson, Tennessee. This effort was most assuredly designed to connect the two seats of government--county and district.[17]

Even as the county's governmental structure took shape, divisiveness broke out between county leaders. Like all men from time immemorial, the founders of Hardin County found it impossible to agree on most issues. The primary division seems to have sprung from personalities rather than geography or an issue-based split. Naturally, little is known about the circumstances behind the formation of these interest groups, but very quickly, two strong personalities arose, individuals who would dominate the county political scene for the next forty years--Colonel James Hardin and David Robinson.

James Hardin, son of Colonel Joseph Hardin, led the people of the northern section of the county. Hardin was an experienced hand at government, representing Knox County from 1813 to 1815 in the 10th General Assembly before removing to his father's land grant. Named to the lucrative and powerful position of county court clerk, Hardin immediately found himself in the center of county politics.[18] As might be suspected, those who gathered under Hardin's banner initially were family members and others who lived nearby in the Cerro Gordo area. Although geography played a role in county politics, the early political conflicts appear to have been driven more by personal loyalties than generated by issues.[b]

David Robinson, a North Carolina native, provided the nucleus for the opposition party. Robinson was born in North Carolina on November 30, 1778.[19] Sometime around 1820, Robinson and his brother, James, moved to Hardin County. The pair acquired a great deal of land along Turkey and upper Horse Creek.[20] Again, as in the case of the Hardinites, Robinson's supporters were his neighbors from the central portion of the county. Among those allies were the Cherrys, Harbours, James Barnes, and Alexander W. Sweeney.

Although the specifics of the conflict are lost to history, those glimmers left behind by early county oracles, indicate that the first clash came during the legislative election of 1820. In that contest, the

[b] Political allegiances have been determined primarily using extant recorded votes by justices and signatories on surety bonds for officeholders.

opposing candidates were James Barnes, of Hardin County, and William Burns of Wayne County. The group forming around Robinson supported Barnes, while the Hardin cabal backed Burns.[c] This first contest resulted in a victory for the Hardin forces, aided perhaps by the more numerous Wayne County voters.[21]

The Robinson faction was not without its strengths, however. Isham Cherry held the post of county court chairman, providing the Robinson forces with a formidable presence in the local government. When Cherry's term expired in late 1821, Barnes was elected to fill the vacancy. Open conflict, however, was about to break out.[22]

On January 8, 1822, James W. Judkins, a lawyer, became a candidate for sheriff and was elected.[23] David Robinson filed suit contesting the election on the grounds that Judkins was then the clerk of the circuit court and was therefore ineligible to run for sheriff. Judkins' election was voided, and John Huddleston was elected in his place. Robinson served as one of Huddleston's bondsmen.[24]

Judkins would not be defeated that easily. He produced a copy of his resignation from the clerkship which had been forwarded by a friend to Judge Joshua Heiskell of the circuit court. In response to this new

[c] Goodspeed mistakenly lists Joel Walker as Barnes's opponent, but according to the Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly, Volume 1, William Burns of Wayne County represented Wayne and Hardin counties from 1821 to 1823. Joel Walker is listed as representing Hardin County in the state senate during several terms but never in the lower house.

information, the court appointed a third party to act as sheriff until the matter could be resolved. At a later date, the dispute was settled and a new election was held between Judkins and Huddleston. Judkins won and the Robinson faction had lost that battle.[25]

The debacle over the sheriff's office was just the opening tip at that January 1822 session of the court. Colonel James Hardin, the county court clerk, was removed from office for failing to produce receipts showing he had turned over the taxes to the state officials, insinuating therefore that Hardin had embezzled the money.[26]

Either unable or unwilling to satisfy the Robinson party, Hardin refused to co-operate and was ousted. Alexander Sweeney, a loyal Robinson man, was elected clerk pro tem in his place, with Robinson, Samuel Harbour, and Isham Cherry serving as his bondsmen.[27] In order to take on the clerk's office, Sweeney was forced to resign as one of the commissioners assigned to settle with the sheriff and trustee. Robinson was elected to this position.[28] A rump session of the county court met at the close of the regular session, comprised, it appears, of Hardin men, and they promptly restored Colonel Hardin to his clerkship. At the next term of court, this action was nullified.[29]

In July of that year, David Robinson and his fellow commissioners, Jesse Gantt and Joel Casey, met with James Hardin to demand the necessary papers and vouchers they needed to make their settlement. Colonel Hardin refused, as he had done in the past, and the commissioners were forced to make the settlement the

best way they could.[30]

The court minutes are silent on this issue, but an interesting note appears in James Knox Polk's correspondence in 1839. It seems to shed a little light on the controversy, or rather what happened to it. Aaron V. Brown, in a letter to Polk summing up the political situation in Hardin County, makes the following request:

> Write to Esqr. Harber in Savannah & say that the fee in the old case of the Justices of Harden[sic] County against the old Clerk is discharged & what has become of the note. He only recollects that the note has never been returned. If you destroyed it say so & if you dont[sic] know anything only say that you have no claim for the fee. He is with us . . .[31]

The "Esqr. Harber" referred to was probably Samuel Harbour, a member of the first quorum court. Apparently, the case against James Hardin was carried to a higher court and young James K. Polk had some connection with it in representing the county.

Little is known about the activities of the two factions during the succeeding pair of years. In 1824, the political in-fighting started anew. County Court Clerk Alexander Sweeney was removed from office on the same charges levied against Colonel Hardin two years before. Ousted for failing to produce satisfactory treasurer's receipts, proving that tax monies had been properly deposited with the Western District office in Jackson, Sweeney's departure created a new void in the clerk's office. The Robinson contingent held on to the post, selecting David Robinson himself as the clerk pro tempore.[32] Sweeney later recovered his post by

producing the desired receipts.[33]

Robinson experienced difficulty holding his troops in line. A move in January 1824 to reinstate Sweeney met strong opposition. Isham Cherry, a Robinsonian, was one of three votes against having Sweeney reinstated; he was joined by John McCullough Ross and Jonathan W. Martin. Ross, at least, was also a member of the Robinson faction. Earlier, Cherry had protested that the county had more justices than provided by the state constitution. Cherry resigned his commission at the end of that week.[34]

The next documented fracas occurred in 1825. Sheriff James Judkins, selected in the debacle of 1823, appeared to have defaulted on a $350 surety bond. Governor William Carroll requested that Judkins' bondsmen fulfill their obligation under the bond and they did so. Judkins was then removed as sheriff. James Robinson, the brother of David Robinson, was proposed as Judkins' replacement. Unfortunately, James already served as county treasurer. Taking their cue from the incident two years before, the Hardin faction contested Robinson's election on the grounds that he held two positions at the same time. Robinson promptly submitted his resignation as treasurer to Judge Joshua Heiskell in Jackson. Judge Heiskell accepted the resignation, but sided with the Hardins and upheld the county court's action in removing Robinson as sheriff. The Robinson party was defeated on both fronts, and James Robinson was left without a post.[35]

After his dismissal as county court clerk, Colonel James Hardin did not serve in another office. His

fortunes declined, and he was forced to sell off land, as much as 900 acres in bits and pieces.[36] He died in 1826 and records are unclear as to who assumed the mantle of leadership. David Robinson went on to become one of the wealthiest and most powerful men in the county. Although the political leanings of these early factions is shadowy at best, Brazelton asserts that the Hardin party eventually became Whigs and the Robinsons became Democrats.[37]

With the formation of a county government and the first political parties came also the need for a seat of government. James Hardin's cabin could only serve the purpose for so long, though it sat at a good location--not far from the mouth of Horse Creek and near the site of present-day Cerro Gordo. In April 1820, Hiram Boone, James Barnes, Stephen Roach, Ninian Steele, and Hardin Williams were appointed to oversee the building of a temporary courthouse.[38] Both the January and April terms of court were held at Hardin's cabin.[39] The site of the July session is unrecorded. In October 1820, John G. Williams was allowed $30 for the construction of a temporary structure.[40] It can only be assumed that the court was meeting in the new courthouse by the fall of 1820.

The task of choosing a location for the permanent courthouse posed something of a dilemma. Although a handful of settlements had sprung up across the county, no one place had emerged as the logical choice. The only town of any consequence in the area was Florence, Alabama. Residents in the southern portion of the county often made the trip south to Florence to conduct

business, even to the posting of bonds for marriage. Settlers were forced to carry their corn to Maury County to have it ground.[41] Consequently, the county court appointed James Barnes, A.W. Sweeney, Hiram Boone, and Noah Lilly to seek out a place for the seat of government.[42]

In July 1822, the justices met at the site selected by the committee to serve as the new county seat. After a short session, they then adjourned to the "house of James Hardin to meet . . . at the place holding court at the house of James Hardin." This reference indicates that as late as two years into the county's formal history, the court was still meeting at James Hardin's cabin.[43] The site located by Boone, Lilly, and the others was not satisfactory. A committee appointed by the state legislature--James Barnes, Hiram Boone, John Williams, Alexander Sweeney, John Kindel, Tilman Patton, and Robert Shannon appeared in court. Shannon and Patton refused to take the required oath, and the court appointed Daniel Smith and Noah Lilley to replace them. This new committee was then sworn and charged with locating a seat of justice in Hardin County.[44]

It would seem, however, that the cart had been put before the horse. Almost every entry of importance at that July term refers to "Hardinsville." It was at that term, the one at which the committee was sworn, that they reported that they had "ascertained the center of said county and have purchased fifty acres of land that we located for said Town of Hardinsville on Turkey Creek." On Tuesday morning of that court term, they held the first actual business session at Hardinsville.[45]

This new town was located at the confluence of Turkey and Boone Creeks, almost perfectly situated in the center of the county as dictated by the state legislature. Coincidentally, the site lay in the heart of Robinson territory, a fact that surely did not go unnoticed.

In 1824, town lots were laid off and sold by the committee, who also became the first town commissioners. Lewis Broyles moved his dry goods business from the Cerro Gordo area to Hardinsville. Alexander Sweeney ran a saddler's shop, and Gabriel Eads opened a tavern in the infant settlement.[46] At first the town had fewer than twenty residents. From extant records, it appears that only Broyles, Eads, James Combs, William Sloan, Amos Hardin, Joseph Buckingham, John Kindel, and James Scott lived in the town.[47]

The county government took great pains to provide access to the town from all points in the county. Committees were appointed to survey a number of roads to the courthouse. James Barnes, from the Hardin's Creek area, was commissioned to build the courthouse, one of the first brick buildings in the county. Within a year, the town merited a public square, at which point most of the roads converged.[48] Other roads were laid out to connect the southeastern region with Hardinsville as well as a road to Rudd's Ferry on the river. Hardinsville was mentioned once in a letter from James Walker to James K. Polk in 1826 concerning a mail route from Hardinsville to Florence.[49]

The growth of the town was shortlived as problems

emerged. Residents on the west side of the river were unhappy with the location of the county seat. Their major complaint was the distance involved between Hardinsville and west Hardin, roughly five miles. Without the advantage of a bridge, those settlers found the trip too much of a hardship. As a result, they began to lay the foundations for a county west of the river, separate from both Hardin and McNairy. This effort ran afoul of a statute setting a mileage requirement between county seats and county lines. Despite the failure of this effort, settlers in west Hardin next began negotiations to become annexed by McNairy County. Understandably, the county leaders were opposed to this move. West Hardin contained a high percentage of tillable land, rich, fertile river bottom.[50]

The annexation of west Hardin would have provided McNairy County with access to the river, river trade, and therefore any income to be derived from such trade. Fear of this action caused the county court to accede to the demands of those settlers on the west side of the river. About 1829, the court began a search for a new seat of justice, one which more closely suited the people of west Hardin.[51]

David Robinson had relocated from Turkey Creek to Rudd's Ferry, just north of the mouth of Mud Creek. James Rudd, who arrived in the county after 1825, started a ferry and built a small cabin in a grove of gum saplings. Shortly, Rudd moved on and Robinson acquired the ferry.[52]

With Robinson backing the site, Rudd's Ferry was selected as the new county seat, a move that appeased

the irate residents of west Hardin. Designating the ferry landing as the county seat is indicative of Robinson's strength as a political chieftain. Of all the possible locations along the river at which to locate the new town, it is noteworthy that the place where David Robinson settled was the site ultimately selected.

Hardinsville faded away, known now, appropriately enough as Oldtown. Nothing remains of the first courthouse, though local folklore indicates that for many years it was used as a barn by an area resident.

1. Corlew, 149.
2. Lauderdale County, Alabama. *Marriage Records,* Book One, 136.
3. Hardin County Court. *Minute Book* A, 3.
4. Ibid., 7.
5. Ibid., 5, 6.
6. Hardin County Court. *Land Survey Entry Book One*, 3, 6, 8.
7. Ibid., 113.
8. Ibid., 92; *Survey Entry Book Two,* 1, 3.
9. Harbert, 60.
10. *Minute Book A*, 15; Watson, Monty, "Early History of Hardin County," *Hardin County Historical Quarterly 1,* no. 4 (1983), 1.
11. Ibid.
12. *Minute Book A,* 110.
13. *Minute Book C,* 359.
14. Harbert, 65.
15. Brazelton, 15.
16. *History of Tennessee,* (Nashville: Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886), 832.
17. *Minute Book A*, 36.
18. McBride, Robert, ed. Biographical Directory of the *Tennessee General Assembly,* 2 vols. (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives, 1975), 1:331-332.
19. Hitt, 17.
20. *Survey Entry Book One,* 57, 295; Harbert, 50.
21. McBride, 1:102-103.
22. *Minute Book A*, 21.
23. Ibid., 76.
24. Ibid., 53.
25. Ibid., 52, 53.
26. Ibid., 55, 56.
27. Ibid., 56.
28. Ibid., 57-58.
29. Ibid., 64.
30. Hardin County Court v. James Hardin, 7 Tenn. Rpts. 309 (Sup. Ct. of Errors and Appeals, 1823).
31. Cutler, Wayne, ed. *The Correspondence of James K. Polk* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1979), 5:100. (Hereinafter referred to as *Polk*).
32. *Minute Book A,* 169, 172, 194.
33. Ibid., 220.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 353.
36. Ibid., 153, 218, 239, 240, 265, 289.
37. Brazelton, 51-52.
38. Watson, Monty, "Early History of Hardin County, Tennessee," *Hardin County Historical Quarterly 8*, no. 4: 1; Minute Book A, 9.

39. *Minute Book A,* 8.
40. Ibid., 16.
41. Brazelton, 20.
42. Williams, Henry E. Jr. and Grace Patterson, "The Courthouses of Hardin County, Tennessee" *Hardin County Historical Quarterly 1,* no. 1 (1982), 3.
43. *Minute Book A,* 72.
44. Ibid., 75.
45. Williams and Patterson, 3.; *Minute Book A,* 72-74.
46. Brazelton, 47; *Minute Book A,* 282.
47. *Minute Book A,* 208, 245, 382, 302.
48. Ibid., 149.
49. *Polk,* 1:60-61.
50. Harbert, 66.
51. Brazelton, 48.
52. Harbert, 66; Brazelton, 48.

Chapter Three

The Territorial County and Early Affairs

At its inception, Hardin County comprised much more than it encompasses today. The act of the legislature that established the county set its boundaries as follows:

> Beginning at the southwest corner of Wayne County, and running thence north with west boundary of said county to the northwest corner thereof; then due west to the Mississippi, thence down said river to the southern boundary line of the state; thence east with the south boundary line aforesaid to the beginning.[1]

These lines included the area currently containing McNairy, Fayette, Hardeman and Shelby counties, as well as the southernmost portions of Tipton, Madison, Chester and Perry counties. The political powers in Nashville did not intend to have the strategically located Chickasaw Bluff site dominated by Hardin County. Accordingly, within a few days after the establishment of Hardin,

Shelby County was formed.[2]

Even with this separation, a large block of territory was still governed by Hardin County. While there are a few distinctions made between settlers in Hardin County proper and those in the territory, a handful of references do give some idea of the governance of these farflung areas. In 1823, election precincts included: "John Gillespies's on Forked Deer River in the Territorial County attached to this county. William Boyd's on Snake Creek in the Territorial County. John Petty's on the Hatchy River in the Territorial County."[3]

Judges for those 1823 elections in the territorial county were:

> William Johnson, Theophilus Petty, and John Pitchford at John Petty's on the Hatchie River.
>
> Robert Rankin, John Gillispie, and John S. Ingram at Gillispie's on the Forked Deer.
>
> David Graham, William Rogers, and Matthew Brown at William Boyd's on Snake Creek.[4]

The exact location of Snake Creek is uncertain. A number of counties in the general vicinity had creeks named Snake. What is known is that the people of the territorial county were definitely a colorful lot. The year before, 1822, two of the soon-to-be judges at the election figured prominently in Hardin County court affairs. Matthew Brown was charged with inciting a riot. David Graham was indicted for running a tipling house. A later charge of assault and battery was added to Graham's charges. Brown's trial in October 1822 ended in a hung jury. The charges against Graham were later dismissed.[5]

Numerous men, such as Brown and Graham above,

known to have lived in these attached areas, appear in court cases during this period. Constables were appointed, which relieved some of the sheriff's burden, but taxes had to be collected and receipted, something for which the sheriff was under bond. In a day when horses were the quickest form of transportation, governing this huge tract must have been a difficult chore.

In time, new counties were carved out of this territory. McNairy, Hardeman and Fayette counties were established fairly quickly, taking some of that northern area with them.[6] Chester wasn't erected until late in the century. Hardin, Wayne, and Perry traded territory back and forth until they finally ended up with their current boundaries.

From the beginning, Hardin County was the domain of the small farmer. While many of the large, land speculators--Thomas Shute, Francis McGavock and other absentee landowners--were purchasing river bottoms, much of this land was in the hands of Hardin countians.[7] Small farmers, however, retreated to the hills and hollows surrounding the complex stream system on the east side of the river. The creek bottoms were fertile, but the amount of arable land was limited in comparison to the wide, expansive river bottoms. Still, the small farmers were in the vast majority in the Hardin County of 1825.

The early crops included both cotton and corn, among other staples. Cotton dominated the river bottoms; corn was more widely planted in the creek bottoms. In fact, corn was so widely grown that by 1850 farmers in Hardin County were producing almost 500,000 bushels of corn annually. At that same date, not quite seven hundred bales of cotton were produced. Wheat, not mentioned

previously, was also a solid cash crop. Over 7,000 bushels of wheat were harvested yearly.[8]

The majority of the cotton was raised on the west side of the river, where the flat terrain was more conducive to such a crop. Although the use of slave labor will be discussed in detail elsewhere, essentially, such labor was confined to two areas. The well-to-do in Savannah owned slaves, and the planters on the west side of the river used the bulk of the available slave labor. Only there, where larger tracts could be cultivated, was the use of slaves profitable. The small tracts planted by the farmers on the eastern side were not sufficiently productive to justify the use of such labor.

As has been proven over the course of American history, people have a predisposition toward moving. Transportation routes and roads were of the utmost importance to the early settlers.

Of the major transportation routes close to the county, two are better known than any other--the Natchez Trace and the Tennessee River. The location of the Natchez Trace, as marked by the Park Commission, shows the trail running through Wayne County to the east. Some statements in the Hardin County Court minutes indicate that at least a portion of the famous route, or a branch of it, ran through the southeastern section of Hardin County. Watson and Harbert contended that the trace actually ran through Hardin rather than Wayne. According to Harbert:

> The location of the Natchez Trace, the route used by Andrew Jackson when he lead his men from Nashville southward during the War of 1812, has been officially located through Wayne County to the east of

> Hardin County. Many of the old settlers here believe now, and have for years, that in reality this road passed through the southeastern part of this county. For a hundred years it has been handed down from mouth to ear that General Jackson's army encamped for a while at Wolf Pit Hill, about 12 miles east of Savannah. From there Jackson went south, crossing the river at the shoals near Eastport, Alabama. Judge A.A. Watson who had a splendid memory--who was in his lifetime probably better versed in Hardin County history than any other, took the writer to this supposed route in this county, and showed him signs made by the encamped army.[9]

While it is acknowledged that the commission responsible for locating the route of the Trace through eastern Wayne County did so in all good faith, two entries, among others, in the Hardin County Court minutes must be referenced. These entries lend credence to Hardin County's claim on this historic road.

> Ordered that the following men be appointed to view and mark a road from the mouth of Swift Creek the nearest and best way to intersect the Natches[sic] Road near Benjamin Hardins to the Wayne Cty line.[10]

> Noah Lilley, Jefferson Farrar, Samuel White, James English, and John Choat appointed to mark a road from Ervin's Ferry to intersect the Natches Road at or near Col. Johnson's.[11]

From these entries, it is apparent that the Trace lay near the Hardin County line. Benjamin Hardin's residence lay on the western edge of Wayne County, and therefore, if his house sat near the "Natches Road," then the famous

trail ran much further west than previously supposed. Indeed, Natchez Trace State Park lies even further to the west. While the evidence is inconclusive, these entries do provide primary documentation that the Trace's present location may be in error.

The second route was the Tennessee River. Traffic on the river must have seemed heavy for the times. The stream became the major transportation route from east Tennessee into middle and west Tennessee. It was the quickest, and probably the least fraught with danger, discounting the Muscle Shoals.

The people who would be Hardin countians came from across Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina, with a scattering from Georgia and Alabama. Census records show that most settlers came from the first three states.

Three primary routes provided access into the Hardin County area.[d] A significant percentage of settlers came from central and western North Carolina. They crossed the mountains and either came overland, or floated down the Tennessee River through Alabama and thence north into the county. Another route brought settlers from the Abbeville/96 district of South Carolina on the Georgia border across Tennessee to Lincoln and Maury counties. Some of these settlers came on south to Hardin County; others slipped down into Lauderdale County, Alabama, made a crop or two, and then came north into the newly-ceded lands.

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[d] These routes were selected after careful consideration of immigration paths indicated by genealogical studies in the Hardin County area.

A third route extended down the Tennessee River from upper east Tennessee in the Greene County area. A number of early pioneers came from this region. Some of these families came overland, while others, like Lewis Broyles, took the river route. These are only the primary routes, along which large parties of settlers traveled. Single families, reaching out for a new life in the wilds of west Tennessee, hacked their way along a number of paths, some well-traveled, others less so. At trail's end, they found the hollows and creek bottoms of Hardin County.

When any new frontier opens up, men of vision see broad possibilities. The forest-laden acres and flat river bottoms of Hardin County held many opportunities for success in both industry and business. While the county held less promise than some of the more arable land to the west, there were men prepared to take the risk and gamble on success.

Business began in the Hardin County area with trading posts. According to Harbert, prior to the actual settlement of Hardin County in the 1815-16 period when the area was still unsettled,

> ...trading posts were established and, those seeking to sell their hides and furs would receive merchandise in exchange. One of the early posts affecting Hardin County was established just south of its southern boundary line in the state of Alabama near the present town of Waterloo; another was established early on the west bank of the Tennessee River just above the modern town of Saltillo.[12]

The very early settlers were blessed with little industry

and few shops during the first years. The only grist mill close enough to provide its services to Hardin countians was on Cathey's Creek in Maury County.[13] Factories were nonexistent, settlers being more interested in clearing land for farms than processing lumber.

Three men are credited with establishing the first mill in the county. Hannah Pickens, an early settler who lived into the 20th century, claimed Robert Lacefield, a resident of the Smith Forks area, built the first mill.[14] Brazelton states that Henry Garner opened the first in 1820.[15] The census of that year shows Isham Cherry as having the only mill and cotton gin in the area. The records of that census detail a fairly large operation. Cherry owned one water mill and cotton gin. He employed four men, five women, and six children. The number of employees, fifteen, indicate that this venture was most likely a family enterprise.[16]

Henry Garner and Robert Lacefield did operate mills, both located in the northeast section of the county. By 1824, six years after the organization of the county, Charles B. Neilson, Jesse Lacefield, Samuel Johnson, James Montgomery, Michael Berry, John McCullough Ross, and John Williams had all established mills at various points in the county.[17]

Another early manufacturing concern was that of Jonathan Courtney. Settling on Indian Creek, Courtney made plows, spinning wheels, shoes, and looms. His early prices are quoted as $3.00 for a spinning wheel and $.50 for a pair of shoes.[18]

Matthew Barnes and John Montgomery opened tanyards near the present site of Saltillo. Jesse Holland

established one near James Montgomery's mill at Shady Grove Church. George Bain started a tanyard near Savannah.[19]

Isham Cherry found himself in competition with Harrison Tompkins and Thomas Hammond in the cotton ginning business. Tompkins opened his mill on Whitlow's Creek in 1822. Soon after, Hammond went into business at an unnamed location.[20]

As the county seat, Hardinsville attracted several new merchants. John Kindel, from Greene County, Tennessee, opened the first hotel in the county. Alexander Sweeney operated a saddler's shop. Lewis Broyles moved his store to the newly-established town. When Savannah became the county seat, these men and others moved to the village on the river bank. Broyles, one of the most prosperous, bought the courthouse at Hardinsville and used it for storage.[21]

Partnerships and banks came with the growth of the county, feeding the continued rise in business and trade. James Irwin and Lewis Broyles joined forces in a mercantile venture. John Kindel opened a tavern early in the county's history, as did several others.[22]

In the Saltillo area, Perry Hawkins and his family opened a mercantile store. Operating the business in conjunction with a river landing, the Hawkinses soon gave their name to the site, and until 1850, the area was known as Hawkins' Landing.[23]

During the early 1840s businessman George F. Benton formed a partnership with an ambitious young clerk named William Harrell Cherry. Cherry, a son of Eli Cherry, became a protege of planter and politician David

Robinson as well as Robinson's son-in-law. Though the partnership with Benton dissolved within a few years, it established young Cherry as a shrewd businessman.[24]

Factory Hollow, an area in the southern portion of the county near Pyburn, was said to be the site of several manufacturing concerns. Reports from the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* detail a foray by Union marines into the Factory Hollow area.25 Those reports note the existence of a cotton gin, a factory producing undisclosed goods, and other commercial concerns. During the 1980s, a belt buckle was discovered in Factory Hollow which bore the name "Herbertsville". Further research indicated that a small settlement, including a mercantile and a factory manufacturing buckles, was located in that vicinity.[26]

Another type of business that proliferated during the early years was the tavern or ordinary. Rhys Isaac's study of 18th century Virginia provides a good description of the importance of taverns in frontier society:

> By looking at the taverns, where the out-of-court activity centered, we can most readily sense the texture of community life. No detailed accounts survive of the nature of the action in and around these public houses, but passages can be found in travelers journals that give intimations of the tone. These accounts suggest that in addition to buying and selling, borrowing and lending, patrons participated in continual play at cards and other games of skill or hazard. Dice, billiard tables, and decks of cards were standard equipment in the ordinaries.[27]

Hardin County suffered no lack of taverns. The first

tavern licensed in Hardin County was that of Harrison Tompkins in October 1820. At that same term of court, Andrew Boyd was also given permission to run an ordinary.[28] By January, 1823, Isaac Jones, John Garner, Elisha Smith, James F. McMahan, John Kindel, James Hardin, Samuel Bruton, Wylie J. Duckworth, Daniel Lacewell, Isaac Northcutt, Thomas Duckworth, Gabriel Eads, and John Huddleston had all received licenses to operate taverns.[29] The people's need for relaxation and libation seems to have been fully met.

Having the Tennessee River flowing through the center of the county was both a distinct advantage and a bothersome hindrance. Farmers were closer to their markets, but the natural barrier it formed kept the county divided, creating ready-made divisions between east and west Hardin County.

To bring the two parts together, it was necessary to establish ferries. The early settlers were not slow to move. Several ferries were opened before the organization of the county government. With the advent of governmental regulation, ferryowners were required to obtain authorization from the county court to remain in business.

James Hardin was allowed to keep his ferry at the mouth of Horse Creek in April 1821. James McMahon, at that same term of court, was authorized to establish a ferry opposite that of Hardin's. Charles B. Neilson ran a ferry a few miles upstream from that of James Rudd's at the site of present day Savannah. Other ferries were Samuel Bruton's, located near where Bruton's Branch flows into Pickwick Lake, John Huddleston's, and John Rawlings's, neither of which can be located.[30]

With governmental regulation also came restrictions on the prices that could be charged. At the April 1821, the justices set the following rates:

Man and horse ..... .25
Single man or horse ..... .12 and 1/2
Wagon and team 1.00
Each head of cattle ..... .06 &1/4
Each head of hogs..... .03
Each head of sheep..... .03
Each cart ..... .75[31]

The Tennessee River became, in many ways, the lifeblood of the county. River traffic was far more heavily weighted towards import of goods than export during the early years. Agricultural products were needed at home, and no appreciable industry, that could create exportable goods, was yet in existence. Merchants depended on the river to bring them the goods for their stores; salt was imported by the Kanawha Salt Company from Paducah, Kentucky on barges and sold at four dollars a bushel.[32]

River ports were established at Eastport in Mississippi, upriver, and downstream at Paducah, Kentucky. The port at Paducah soon became a primary shipping point for the produce and manufactured items of Hardin County.

Riverboats, while more popularly connected with the Mississippi River, also plied the Tennessee River. The county was a stopping-off point for such craft, and inquest reports from the antebellum days echo the danger and the inherent romanticism of those days. One such inquiry in 1855 found that an unknown man, age unstated, was

discovered in the Tennessee River. Among his personal effects were a pocketbook with $7.55, a trunk key, and a $5 note on the Northwest Bank of Virginia. Indications were that he came from a riverboat.[33]

The Hardin County of the 1820s and early 1830s bore little resemblance to the stereotypical South. No white pillars graced the county's landscape, few brick buildings stood, and few large slaveholders lived within its bounds. The planter of Hardin County lived in a simple dogtrot cabin with, perhaps, a shack in the back for the three or four slaves he was able to own.

The planters, for the most part, came in early. Most brought at least a little wealth with them. The Hardins--James, Benjamin, Gibson, and Robert--were among the more well-to-do. James Hardin is said to have had a fine two-story home in the Cerro Gordo area.[34] Another group of Hardins also ranked in the social elite. The family of Colonel Martin Hardin, no relation to the Joseph Hardin family, settled in the county during the 1820s. Colonel Martin Hardin served at the Battle of Kings Mountain.[34]

The social hierarchy in Hardinsville and, later, Savannah, included essentially the same families. David Robinson's home on the banks of the Tennessee River was one of the only true, white-pillared homes in the county. He established his family as part of the first tier socially. Sharing this same plateau with the Robinsons was the Lewis Broyles family.

Out in the county James Walker was the largest slaveholder in the county, as of 1850, owning over 70 slaves. Walker was almost certainly the brother-in-law of James Knox Polk. Isham Cherry, of the Loweryville area,

was also considered part of the landed gentry, although records indicate that, along with many of his contemporaries, he was land poor--a situation in which a person owned a great deal of land, but had little in terms of cash assets.

Other planters included Daniel Smith, the first sheriff, Colonel Harrison Stephens, who is credited with having the first brick building in Savannah, Lewis Outlaw, the Fraleys, the Lees, and James Irwin.

Except for men like Harrison Stephens, James Graham, and David Robinson, their homes were simple affairs, one-room cabins, and they planted only the items essential to survival. Little acreage was available to plant for profit. Since the land speculators snapped up the river bottoms, the poorer families were forced to make do with the narrow hollows and creek bottoms.

The McCaslands, Berrys, and Cagles among others settled in the northern part of the county. Michael Berry's will was the first probated by the county court.[36] The Welches, Pickens, Crotts, Harbours, Jerrolds, Franks, Harrisons, Austins, and others made their homes in the central and southern parts of the county. The Bells, Hagys, Orrs, Andersons, Ganns, and Shannons settled west of the river.[37]

Although farming was the predominant occupation in antebellum Hardin County, both planters and small farmers often supplemented their farm income with a sideline as a merchant or artisan. Jonathan R. Pickens ran a blacksmith shop in the Turkey Creek area. Colonel Arthur B. Campbell ran a tanyard. Only a few men, like James Irwin and Lewis Broyles, were primarily merchants

who farmed on the side.[38]

The lines between social classes were very fine and distinctions were hard to discern. Most differences arose between town and county, rather than wealth and poverty. The county was yet to be tamed, and while, people being people, some most assuredly played on social differences, too much work was to be done. Frontier societies, in light of the hardships associated, are more egalitarian by nature. Hard work is more prized than a sack full of gold; a ready joke to lighten the often tense atmosphere was equally valuable.

Those early citizens were a colorful lot. In January, 1821, Jesse Morris bit off John Boyd's ear.[39] Later that same year, David Moss swore out a peace warrant against county coroner Stephen Roach. This particular feud lasted for a few years; Moss swore another peace warrant out against Roach in 1823.[40] John McCullough Ross charged Benjamin Hardin with assault and battery in 1823.[41] Such complaints were frequent in the first years of the county's history, and the names of the most prominent citizens are as likely to seen in this connection as any other.

Little is known about artisans in the area. Though there were some, such as the slave, Harry Hooks, who worked as a cobbler in a successful attempt to buy his freedom. James Graham, founder of Graham's Chapel Church, built many fascinating pieces of furniture and mantles, some of which have survived to the present day.[e]

America became a litigious society very early in its

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[e] John J. Ross, Jr., of Savannah, a descendant of Graham's owns at least one piece of furniture attributed to him.

history, and the expanding frontier was no exception. The need for lawyers arose before the first crop was harvested, and an ever-increasing number of young legal minds stood at the ready to meet that demand. The opening of another county, to these circuit riders, meant a new market for their wares, and they jumped at the opportunity to practice their craft.

The first attorneys to present their credentials to the county court were Isaac S.W. Cooke and James W. Combs. Cooke's place of residence is unknown, and he practiced widely across west Tennessee. Combs, however, was to become a citizen of Hardin County, and he was later elected county coroner. This pair was sworn in during January, 1821.[42]

Joel Casey, sometimes referred to as Dr. Casey, was licensed to practice law in January 1822. In April of that year, Jarod S. Allen and Henry L. Gray were both certified as lawyers by the county court. A few months later, James W. Judkins, who played a prominent role in the political warfare between the Hardins and the Robinsons, was licensed as a lawyer. Incidentally, Judkins was paid five dollars for providing the county its first official seal.[43]

A procession of attorneys from other counties made their appearance at terms of the circuit court. Two of the most prominent were Nashvillian Felix Grundy and Columbian James Knox Polk. Grundy tried cases in Savannah as early as 1825, and Polk, who had relatives there, did legal work in the county.[44]

Probably the most celebrated case in early Hardin County history was that of Polly Hughes for the murder of

her husband. The Hughes case attracted much attention across west Tennessee and, according to local folklore, the execution of Mrs. Hughes caused the Hardin County sheriff to resign his position for fear he would have to preside at the execution of another woman.[f] The Jackson Gazette provided a detailed summary of the case:

> On Friday the 13th inst. Polly Hughes, who had been convicted at the Circuit Court of Hardin County, for the murder of her husband, was executed at Savannah, in Hardin County. The crowd on the occasion was not as great as was anticipated--and is variously estimated at from 500 to 800 persons. The scene must have been revolting to the feelings of humanity; and, we humbly trust, is the last of the kind we shall have to notice in the annals of our state. It is true however, that the circumstances were of an aggravated nature; and, under our system of criminal law, death was the most proper mode of punishment. The depravity of this wretched woman must have been of the deepest hue, to induce a jury of her country to pass upon her case in such as to cause the awful sentence of the law to deprive her of life. The fact, we understand, was clearly proven, and indeed, openly avowed by the criminal, that when her husband was asleep, being in a state of beastly intoxication, and having himself, threatened her life, she took an ax, and deliberately struck him on the head, upon which, he drew up his shoulders, and gave other signs of great pain--she then repeated the blow, and from its effect, he immediately expired. She then retired to

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[f] The identity of this sheriff remains unknown. Harbert and others have speculated that it was Thomas Gray, but the dearth of court records during this time period make it difficult to determine exactly who held the office.

> rest, having previously provided his burial clothes, and on the following morning, endeavored to make her escape, but was soon arrested, and committed for trial. We understand that the unfortunate wretch, fainted when brought under the gallows, and was with difficulty restored so as to stand up to admit the adjustment of the rope preparatory to her final passage from time to an awful eternity; the scene was awful, indeed--and the sympathies of the crowd greatly excited, not only for the wretched woman, but for her hapless offspring, who are of tender age, and very poor.[45]

Many of the early settlers of Hardin County were educated men. Alexander McClintock, one of the first surveyors, and Ninean Steele, a son-in-law of Colonel Joseph Hardin, were said to have been outstanding mathematicians. Robert A. Hardin was Princeton-educated.[46] Education was a priority with the county fathers. For the first settlers, teaching was an impromptu, done-in-the-home, chore. The formation of the government and the growth of the county necessitated a more formal organization.

In June 1824, the county court appointed James Barnes, Joel Casey, David Robinson, J.G. Williams, and Jesse Gantt as school commissioners. The caliber of the men appointed suggests the importance attached to their task. Barnes would one day sit in the state legislature. Robinson, as has been noted, was one of the most powerful men in the county. Williams was a prosperous merchant and one-time chairman of the county court. Gantt and Casey held county office throughout most of their lives.[47]

The first schoolteacher of record was a man named Thomas Stockton. An east Tennessee native, Stockton opened his schoolhouse in the Cerro Gordo region. That first structure was an eighteen by eighteen log cabin with a dirt floor. A number of pupils in that original class were grown men and women. Unlike many schoolmasters of the time, who moved frequently, Stockton remained in the county until his death in 1840.[48]

Beyond the appointment of the commissioners and establishment of school districts and schools within each district, little was actually accomplished during the first fifteen years. In the next two decades, more elaborate steps were taken to upgrade and improve the educational system in the county so that by 1840, approximately eight schools were operating in the county. B.G. Brazelton reports that the county spent approximately $1,500 on the school system in 1839 with a scholastic population of 2,374.[49]

Two schools were located in the first civil district. One was directed by Fielder Woodward, a sixty year old Maryland native. He taught some twenty students in his common school. Besides teaching, he also farmed, and in November, 1840, he took in an orphan, Elizabeth Ann Freeman.[50] The other school was under the tutelage of Edward Sanford. In his fifties at the time of the 1840 census, Sanford had five children of his own.[51]

The fifth district school was taught by Edward G. Dinkens, a farmer.[52] Jonathan R. Pickens taught a school in the eighth district. Pickens supplemented his teaching income by working as a blacksmith.[53]

Among the needs of the young county was that of

medical care. In those days, the average person was forced to learn a good deal about taking care of minor ailments, since the closest physician might be twenty or thirty miles away.

The first doctor to see to the needs of Hardin County was a Dr. Brown of Columbia in Maury County. In time, the new territory lured a number of other young physicians. Joel Casey, who had arrived in the county as early as January 1822, was apparently a doctor. The marker over his grave in the Oldtown cemetery identifies him as Dr. Joel Casey. This same Joel Casey was licensed as a lawyer as well.[424]

Another physician who settled in the county at an early date was Dr. Robert Watt. Dr. Watt, son-in-law of early settler William Allison, arrived in the county as early as 1824. In April of that year, he was paid for providing medical services to Willie Johnson, a pauper.[55] Watt had died by 1845 when his wife was mentioned in her father's will as "relict of Dr. Watt, dec'd."[56]

B.G. Brazelton listed a Dr. McMahan as one of the first physicians. This could be James McMahan, one of the early settlers and owner of one of the first taverns. McMahan died in May, 1837.[57] Other antebellum physicians included Dr. Samuel Lowry of Lowryville and Dr. R.W. Crump, for whom the town of Crump is named.[58]

Although few doctors were practicing in Hardin County, some of the young men were leaving home to be educated in the healing arts. Dr. Lunsford Yandell, of Wilson County, Tennessee, moved from a post at Transylvania University to the University of Louisville,

where he helped organize a medical school. William Clarke Kindel, son of hotel keeper John Kindel, earned his degree there in the 1830s.

Religion and church played a major role in the lives of the early settlers. Many people adhered strictly to the six-day work week, saving the seventh for rest and the worship of God. Churches met more than just spiritual needs. It was a time for the people to meet on common ground. It was a time for men to discuss crops, and perhaps, out of earshot of the women, the gait of a fast horse and a fast woman, and the quality of the local moonshine. Of course, it was also a time for the boys and girls to size each other up for the courting rituals.

Entering the region with that first group of colonists was Dr. Robert Hardin, a young Princeton graduate. Hardin, who had never led a church of his own, found his first congregation in the log cabins and dirt floors of southwest Tennessee. While he originally held services in the northern part of the county, he soon moved his little church to the area that would become known as the Campground. The first Baptist church in the county was pastored by Reverend Charles Riddle in 1825.[59]

The Methodists soon formed a congregation in the Hardin's Creek area. John Watson led this church during its organization. Watson passed away in 1840, but the church continued to meet well into the post Civil War period.[60]

Other denominations were forming congregations at the same time. The Pickens family of Rogers Creek is known to have been Baptists, and it is likely that a congregation formed and met in this area.

The early settlers in Hardin County and the conditions they faced were not greatly unlike those of pioneers who came before and after them. The work day lasted from "can see to can't see" and was filled with the multitudinous chores necessary to scratch a living from the earth. It was a virgin land, and those early settlers went about the task of bringing civilization to its deep forests and lonesome hills.

Typically the diet of those days consisted of one of the endless variations on corn meal. The creek bottoms and hollows provided plenty of meat--turkey, duck, geese, and quail. Bears and beavers were also easy to find.

While those first settlers were serious-minded people (events and circumstances dictated that mindset), they looked forward to the opportunity to get together for something other than work, and such recreation took many forms.

Militia muster was not intended to be a day of fun; it was intended as an opportunity for the local men to receive a little instruction in the military arts. Roll was taken and the captain of each company was required to return both the roster and the list of enlistments. Failure to do so resulted in a fine for the militia officer involved.

Any time the people could assemble, however, became a social occasion. Wrestling matches were frequent during muster days, little boys played at drill, courting couples wandered off from the crowd, men talked politics and crops, women talked about each other, politicians worked the crowd, thirsty young men lolled under the shade tree and passed around jugs of whiskey--drunken brawls were not unknown.

Speaking of wrestling, one of the most notable matches of the day took place in the new town of Savannah. No firsthand account of this fight exists, but local folklore generally agrees with Brazelton's account:

> It was during this age of Savannah that two noted fighters, Gipson Hardin and Elisha Smith, met to test their strength. A ring was made, seconds chosen, and the two braves went to battling. A vast crowd of people were present to witness the battle and they were all so eager to see that many crowded upon the roofs of the houses, and the result was they crushed the little pole-cabins to the earth. Mr. Hardin proved to be the better man but Savannah was in ruins![61]

Another form of relaxation was the community hunt. A group of neighbors would gather at someone's house. They would split into two equal groups, one taking one side of the creek and the other the opposite side. A certain amount of time would be allotted, and the group bagging the most game--rabbits, quail, etc.-- would be declared the winner. If someone was discovered on the wrong side of the creek, his scalps were confiscated, but only if they could lay hands on him. The losing groups provided a big feast for the winners.[62]

Any frontier territory holds its share of trials. Poor shelter, wild animals, little food, hostile natives, family feuds, and illness all take their toll on pioneers. Early Hardin countians faced many of these same obstacles.

Wildlife posed the initial threat. Hannah Pickens, daughter of Gabriel Pickens and one of the last of the pioneers, remembered the pack of wolves that attacked her family's camp their first night in the new territory. Only a

shot from Gabriel's musket turned the assault away. Samuel Harbour, of Turkey Creek, had a run-in with a bear, and the rock at which it occurred is still known as Bear Rock.[63]

The local Native Americans posed problems for the citizenry as well. The first murder in the county occurred between red and white. According to Brazelton's version of the local tale, Jacob Blackwell stole a horse from a Chickasaw. The Chickasaw promptly retrieved his horse. Blackwell stole the horse again and, this time, took some blankets as well. The Native American appealed to the locals who formed a jury to try Blackwell.[64]

The jury found Blackwell innocent, something that did not surprise the Chickasaw. Undaunted by the failure of the legal system, the Native American pulled out his rifle and shot Blackwell in full view of the jury. An administrator was appointed to settle Blackwell's estate in April 1820, indicating that the murder took place, probably, in March. According to Brazelton, the Chickasaw made his escape, but was later captured and taken to Columbia. Shelton and Elisha Smith, both constables, were paid for guarding and transporting the Native American.[65]

While the Chickasaws certainly preyed upon the whites, the whites were not completely idle. In 1822, Thomas Webb was indicted by the grand jury for passing counterfeit money and stealing horses from the Chickasaws. William Byrd, Isaac Hale, Felix Henry, and George Wear tracked Webb, captured him, and remanded him to the sheriff. The costs of the case were paid by an agent of the Chickasaw nation. Webb was fined on the counterfeiting charge and found guilty for stealing the

Chickasaw horses.[66] This evenhanded treatment may have been sparked by more practical considerations than a true egalitarian attitude among the settlers. The Creek wars were a mere eight years past, and the horrors of Native Americans in war paint were too fresh in the minds of the settlers to tempt a repeat.

The lack of adequate medical aid posed yet another hardship. The average pioneer was forced to gain a general knowledge of how to deal with the more simple illnesses and injuries. Doctors were options to be used sparingly and with proper judgment. The decision to fetch a doctor was made carefully, mindful always of the torturous path physicians often had to make to complete house calls.

All members of the family participated in the running of the farm. The children went to the fields with the adults, and though they may not have performed exactly the same duties, each had his task to complete. If the family was prosperous enough to own slaves, they most likely worked side-by-side with them in the fields. The children, African-American and white, grew up together and played together.[67] Among slaves, there was probably little difference in the hardships they faced and those encountered by their white masters. They ate the same food, worked the same hours.

The early structures in Hardin County were log cabin affairs. Mostly constructed on the dog-trot design, some were smaller, some larger. One of the first cabins was described as being a one-room building with a loft. The lower room was large, originally floored with dirt and later covered with rough boards. Across the entire length of one wall ran a huge fireplace surrounded by a hand-hewn

mantelpiece. The fireplace was so large a complete tree trunk could be used for a backlog.[68]

As the economy grew and expanded, more sturdy and modern structures were raised. James Graham, who lived in the Graham's Chapel area, built one of the first brick houses in the county. This home, a two-story structure that still stands, provides a fine example of the resourcefulness of the early settler. Unable to bring in the decorative wallpaper he wanted, Graham handpainted designs on the walls to simulate the wallcovering. Graham added a room on the side designated as the "Preacher's Room," which he set aside for the circuit-riding Methodist ministers who preached at Graham's Chapel.[69]

Another of the very early buildings still extant is that brick home attributed to both Isham Cherry and Dr. Samuel Lowery at Lowryville in the southern half of the county. According to local folklore, this home is the oldest brick building still standing in the county, predating the Graham house by two years. Brazelton, Harbert, and Watson disagree as to whether it was Cherry or Lowery who constructed the house.[70] Adjacent to this house is an old store building. The exact age of the structure is unknown, the original construction may have been as early as 1840. The Masonic Lodge, defunct for many decades, is said to have met in the top floor of the building.[g] The store remained open, operated by the late Shelby Franks, until the early 1980s.

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[g] A news report in the Savannah Courier in 1887 tells of the completion of the Masonic lodge at Lowryville. The report does not indicate whether this was a renovation to an already existing structure or a new construction. Courier, 1887.

Of course, far and away the best known example of antebellum architecture in the county is the Cherry House. This two-story, Greek Revival house was originally built about 1830 by David Robinson. Used by General Grant as his headquarters prior to the Battle of Shiloh, the walls are unusually thick, and the building is fronted by an expansive porch. Robinson willed the home to his daughter, Sarah Robinson Cherry, wife of William H. Cherry. She died in 1848 and the house fell into Cherry's hands.[71]

1. Acts of Tennessee
2. Corlew, 149.
3. *Minute Book A,* 112.
4. Ibid., 87.
5. Ibid., 79-80.
6. Corlew, 149.
7. *Survey Entry Book One,* 40, 42, 243.
8. Brazelton, 56.
9. Harbert, 65.
10. *Minute Book A,* 15.
11. Ibid., 15.
12. Harbert, 41.
13. Brazelton, 20.
14. Hitt, 25-26.
15. Brazelton, 20.
16. U.S. Census, 1820, Hardin County, Tennessee.
17. Goodspeed, 832.
18. Harbert, 46.
19. Ibid., 53.
20. Brazelton, 45.
21. Williams and Patterson, 5.
22. Goodspeed, 833.
23. Brazelton, 31.
24. *Savannah Courier,* 17 September 1885.
25. U.S. War Department, *Official Records of Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion,* 1st ser. 24:64. (Hereinafter cited as *ORN*).
26. Patterson, Grace, "Early Postmasters in Hardin County, Tennessee" *Hardin County Historical Quarterly 6,* no. 1 (1988), 10; U.S. Census, 1860, Hardin County, Tennessee.
27. Isaac, Rhys. The Transformation of Virginia.
28. *Minute Book A,* 16.
29. Ibid., 28, 36.
30. Harbert, 66.
31. *Minute Book A,* 29.
32. Brazelton, 20.
33. *Minute Book F,* 461.
34. Brazelton, 19-20.
35. Harbert, 52.
36. *Minute Book A,* 9.
37. Brazelton, 27-35.
38. *Minute Book A,* 157; *Minute Book C,* 298.
39. *Minute Book A,* 26.
40. Ibid., 40, 143.
41. Ibid., 143.
42. Ibid., 23.

43. Ibid., 52, 67, 76.
44. Harbert, 61.
45. *Jackson Gazette,* November 28, 1829.
46. Brazelton, 45.
47. Ibid., 44.
48. Ibid., 46; *Minute Book C,* 330.
49. Brazelton, 55.
50. *Minute Book C,* 355.
51. U.S. Census, 1840, Hardin County, Tennessee.
52. *Minute Book C,* 476.
53. *Minute Book A,* 157.
54. Ibid., 52.
55. Ibid., 189.
56. Hardin County Court, *Wills, Inventories, and Settlements, Book D,* 318- 320.
57. Brazelton, 52; *Minute Book A,* 175.
58. Harbert, 48, 55.
59. Brazelton, 46.
60. *Minute Book C,* 369; Brazelton, 52.
61. Brazelton, 49.
62. Ibid., 23.
63. Hardin County, Tennessee, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Microfilm, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
64. Brazelton, 23-24.
65. Ibid., 25; *Minute Book A,* 12, 16.
66. Ibid., 90, 93.
67. Pitts, John A., *Personal and Professional Reminiscences of an Old Lawyer* (Kingsport: Southern Publishing, Inc., 1930), 89.
68. Elva Stricklin, interview by author, 16 June 1984, taped.
69. Harbert, 49; Hitt, 18.
70. Harbert, 49.
71. *Will, Inventories, and Settlements, Book D,* 355-364.

Chapter Four

The County Grows
1830 - 1860

Hardin countians played little part in the removal of the Cherokees in 1836-1838. No evidence indicates that the county's militia battalion was called up to participate, and individual records of the soldiers reveal no Hardin countians. Some men may have crossed the line into Alabama and joined, but this is doubtful since only one battalion from that state was involved.

Local folklore indicates that some of the Cherokees, during the removal from the east, traversed Hardin County on their way west. It is true that a group came over the Tennessee on their way to Paducah and then to the west, but no documentation exists to corroborate a stop-over in Hardin County.

Settlers of Native American descent already in the county went unmolested. Most, like Strawhorn Monk and the Weatherfords, had lived in the county since its first days and, from all indications, suffered little or no

discrimination. While some of the early settlers experienced Native American attacks in the east, Hardin County was never subjected to wholesale warfare. Therefore, much of the motivation for prejudice was not present, and Native Americans were spared the injustice of such discrimination and ill treatment. It simply never became an issue in Hardin County.

Despite its inactivity during the Cherokee Removal, the county militia was still quite active, and even as late as 1835, the militia company was used as a governmental unit. The militia companies and their tax collectors at that date were:

Saml. Houston in Captain Yount's Company
Archd. Davis in Captain Porterfield's Company
Thos. Massey in Captain Burge's Company
Jehu Davy in Captain Carter's Company
Harrison Tompkins in Captain Hugh's Company
Robert Steele in Captain Autry's Company
Samuel Robinson in Captain Dowdy's Company
John Buie in Captain Buie's Company
Eli Cherry in Captain Milligan's Company
T.W. Poindexter in Captain Tankersly's Company
Elisha Harbour in Captain Major's Company
Jesse Jones in Captain Turner's Company
J.W. Ellis in Captain Hardin's Company[1]

Militia officers were still held accountable for proper reporting. In 1846, Captain John Lacefield was fined for failing to return a list of enlistments. Later, the fine was rescinded when it was discovered that he had not officially received his commission.[2]

Apparently, Captain Lacefield was the last of the old

militia officers. Born in the Smith's Fork community in 1827, he was the son of Robert Lacefield, an early pioneer. At the age of nineteen he was elected captain of the militia in the 5th Civil District, replacing Captain Neil McCarn. By this time, there were two colonels in the county. Benjamin Hardin commanded the regiment with his brother John Hardin as second-in-command. C.S. Broyles also received a commission as colonel about this same time. According to a newspaper report in 1905, Captain Lacefield was the last surviving officer of the old militia.[3]

The county was also home to a fair number of veterans from the United States' earliest wars. Named on an 1835 list of pensioners were Ezekiel Forkner, William Lingo, Samuel McFerren, Shadrach Nolen, Thomas Parker, Samuel Robinson, George Ross, Richard Strawn, William Walker, and Daniel Winchester. Most of these men served in either the North Carolina or South Carolina lines during the Revolutionary War.[4]

Antebellum political affairs in Hardin County are difficult to ferret out. Few descriptions of the county's early political contests exist, and the situation must be pieced together from a variety of sources.

To begin with, there were the two factions--the Hardin and Robinson parties. Indications are that the Robinson partisans became Jacksonians and the Hardin group became Whigs. The first legislator to represent Hardin County was William Burns of Wayne County. His political leanings are unknown, but Harbert contends that he was a James Hardin partisan.[5]

In 1822, Hardin County sent a Robinson man, James

Barnes, to the state legislature. Barnes' district included Hardin, Wayne, and Shelby in the first session, plus Tipton and McNairy in the second, a farflung and influential district. Extant records do not reveal the names of his parents or the place of his birth. Having settled in the county prior to its formation, Barnes lived on a land grant near Shady Grove Church. He served in a number of capacities in the infant county: member of the first court, first county registrar, school commissioner, and as one of the commissioners appointed to locate a county seat. Despite this activity, Barnes had disappeared from Hardin County by 1840.[6]

While the supporters of Andrew Jackson were strong during the twenties, there was a swing to the Whig philosophy by the late 1820s when that party began its rise. Benjamin Hardin of Wayne County, and a relative of Colonel James Hardin, held the legislative seat from 1825 to 1827 and again in the 1830s as a Whig.[7] At the Constitutional Convention of 1834, James Scott, representing Hardin and McNairy counties, exhibited an independence not appreciated by the conservative forces, siding with Adam Huntsman, of Madison County, in proposing equal representation for all counties.[8]

By the mid 1830s, the county was entrenched in the Whig camp. Benjamin Hardin's second term was followed by that of fellow Whig Orville Harrison. Little is known of Harrison except that he was a lawyer in Nashville prior to his relocation to Savannah. Harrison, however, served only the one term and apparently left the region around 1838.[9]

James K. Polk, speaker of the U.S. House of

Representatives, eyed the governor's race in 1837, and he corresponded frequently with supporters, soliciting their analysis of the political situations in their areas. Ezekiel P. McNeal of Bolivar, and one of Polk's first cousins, kept him apprised of the political climate in Hardin County. McNeal wrote,

> In Hardin, there is but one candidate, as yet, a Mr. C.C. Gibbs. G. Hardin of Hardin's Creek is spoken of as a candidate likely to run. It appears to be the current opinion that Gibbs will be the member. He is looked upon as favorable to the administration.[10]

"G. Hardin" refers to Gibson Hardin, a son of Colonel Joseph Hardin and brother to Colonel James Hardin. It is uncertain as to whether he actually made the run for the seat.

Conrad C. Gibbs, who came into the county as early as 1825, had been a constable for one of the militia companies.[11] He resigned as constable in December 1834 to stand for election as county court clerk, an election he won. Serving for three years, he resigned in June 1837, probably in order to make the run for the legislature.[12] Gibbs held the seat for his party, but he served only one term. Health and financial problems may have precluded another run. He died in 1844, possibly leaving an insolvent estate.[13]

Polk's campaign for governor, and subsequent elections, bring the political atmosphere in the county into better focus. Hardin was considered a swing county, one that could go either way. In 1838, sometime governor Aaron V. Brown reported that "In Hardin I put it down to a tye[sic]."[14] The stalemate continued into the next year,

and Polk and Brown made numerous visits to Savannah. Brown remarked in a March, 1839 letter to Polk that "In Hardin, the parties are nearly balanced."[15] At the end of that month, after a trip to Savannah, Brown expanded on his analysis,

> In Hardin, there are 4 candidates for the lower house --2 Whigs and 2 Democrats - McGinnis is the strong Democrat and will be elected. Alexander Hardin the lawyer came out for Clay. I made good speeches in all and the work goes on rather slowly but hopefully.[16]

The mood had shifted, and after four years of Whig domination in the county, the Jacksonian Democrats were returning to power. Christopher H. McGinnis was a relative newcomer to the county. Originally from Washington County, Virginia, McGinnis settled first in Madisonville, Tennessee, where he operated a hotel and tavern.[17] Relocating about 1830, McGinnis established a hotel at Savannah and entered politics, being elected trustee in 1837 prior to his election to the legislature.[18]

McGinnis was one of Polk's strong supporters, and he also was active in party politics. In October 1842, McGinnis was named secretary of the Democratic legislative caucus. The next year, Polk refers to McGinnis as a friend, and the Hardin countian wrote to Polk frequently, updating him on the Hardin County political situation.[19]

The ensuing election went as predicted. McGinnis defeated Alexander Hardin, and Polk carried the county for the Democrats by a 270 vote majority. Not a landslide, but if the county was truly a Whig bastion, it must have

been more than satisfying for Polk.[20]

Hardin County had earned a reputation as a Whig stronghold, or so Polk wrote to one of his supporters. To sway voters, he visited Savannah in June, 1839, and attended a dinner with his supporters.[21]

That election spelled the end of Whig dominance in the county. McGinnis held the legislative seat from 1839 to 1847, the longest tenure of any legislator to that point. Among other prominent Democrats and Polk supporters were Jesse B. Gantt and George F. Benton. Polk received invitations to visit Savannah from both men in the early 1840s.[22]

Savannah was the site of a Whig mass meeting on September 12, 1844 that featured John Bell and Neil S. Brown. George S. Houston, a Democrat, attended the meeting as well and debated with the Whigs. He reported to Polk that he,

> . . . made a fight with them all day. The democrats were well satisfied and crowing loud after we got through. The Whigs were silent. . .. I was much disappointed on Bells speech. I had never heard him before. He is greatly behind what I had anticipated.[23]

Christopher McGinnis disappears from county records about 1847, after he left the state legislature. Where he went and why he left are questions that remain unanswered. Monty Watson, writing in the *Hardin County Historical Quarterly,* offers an interesting explanation for McGinnis' disappearance:

> Another killing about this date, 1850, was that of William Freeman in front of the lot that the First National Bank is built on in Savannah. A man by the

> name of McGinnis, who had been prominent here as the Sheriff of the County had a difficulty with Mr. Freeman about some rents that Mr. Freeman claimed he did not owe. This brought on hard words, McGinnis hit Freeman with a club and killed him. McGinnis fled and was never apprehended or brought to trial. Mr. Freeman had married a Miss Polk, who only lived two years after his death. Their children were all bound out.[24]

County records fail to verify this account, although some evidence exists to support the binding out of the Freeman children, but in 1846, not 1850.[25] Still, the story offers a logical explanation for McGinnis' sudden disappearance.

At the end of McGinnis' term in 1847, longtime resident and sometime sheriff, Daniel Smith, retained the seat for the Democrats. Smith, a Green County, Kentucky native, served two terms in the state house, extending the Democratic domination of the legislative seat. He served two, widely-separated terms as sheriff, 1820-22 and 1844-46; he dropped from public life after his second legislative term and died in 1865.[26]

Polk carried the county in the presidential election of 1844, but in 1848, Hardin countians voted for Whig candidate Lewis Cass. The county returned to the Democratic fold in 1852, giving Franklin Pierce a majority in that election.[27]

Aaron V. Brown, due probably to his repeated visits to the county, easily carried Hardin in the gubernatorial election of 1847. Trousdale carried the county in 1849 and 1851.[28]

The debate over slavery and the question of secession

was to break Democratic predominance in the county and throw a pall over the political situation for the next decade.

Despite the growing controversy over slavery and states' rights, education in Hardin County seemed promising. The major development was the establishment of the Savannah Male Academy in the late 1830s. Hugh K. Shields, of Giles County, was hired as its instructor. Shields was an experienced and respected educator of the period.[29]

The Savannah Male Academy was a brick structure with chimneys at either end. It was located on the site now occupied by the Welch Building. A financial settlement, filed with the county court in 1845 by the school's trustees, shows that Shields was paid some $240 for teaching at the school, perhaps not so coincidentally the exact amount collected in tuition.[30] Among its students were William Torbet, who later became a Presbyterian minister, and businessman William H. Cherry. Dr. Robert Hardin, M.D., son of Colonel Joseph Hardin, played a prominent role in the organization of the county school system. When Shields resigned in 1850, Hardin was the logical choice to succeed the Giles countian. Extant records are inconclusive as to whether Hardin actually took over the school.

During the early 1850s, a movement began to establish a Female Academy modeled after its male predecessor. In 1853 a new school was constructed with William H. Cherry, James Irwin, George D. Morrow, and George M. Hamilton among its directors. No records exist, unfortunately, to detail either the student body or its

instructors.[31]

In 1860 and 1861, an effort was undertaken to upgrade the academy and change its name to Savannah College. A new brick structure was begun, but the onset of the war dictated other uses for construction materials. For some twelve months, the shell of the Savannah College stood vacant. When Ulysses S. Grant occupied the town in March of 1862, the federal army appropriated the structure, laid a floor, and put the building to use as a hospital to deal with a typhoid fever outbreak.[32] Progress in education came to a halt until the end of hostilities.

Social organizations were rare, but not unknown. According to a summary of early Savannah masonic records, prepared in 1912 by Secretary James W. Irwin, the Savannah Lodge was chartered on October 4, 1843. Evidence indicates, however, that it had been working under dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Tennessee since the previous year.[33]

Savannah, about fourteen years old at that time, had gained significant stature as a town, growing sufficiently to accommodate a Masonic lodge. Certainly, there were members of the Masonic order in Savannah since the county's inception. Nationally, the lodge was quite popular and membership was high in Virginia and North Carolina, homeland to many of Hardin County's settlers.

Dr. George Morrow is noted in the records as the first master of the Savannah lodge. His admission on October 25, 1842 offers some closer approximation of the actual beginnings of Masonic activity in Savannah. By this yardstick, it would seem that the lodge had been active for almost a year before actually receiving its charter.[34]

The period from 1840 to 1860 saw the organization of a number of church congregations. The Harmony Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the Cerro Gordo area was established in 1852, and some time earlier, a Methodist congregation was formed at Savannah.[35]

In the southern region of the county, a Baptist church was built at Turkey Creek by Elisha Pack and others. The first service at this church was held in May 1851. Among the early church members were Sharman Pennington, E.S. Covey, Elisha Harbour, Mary Covey, David Barnett, Mister Debry, A.B. Clark, and Nancy Jane Barnett. Two of the first deacons were Lewis Crotts and Ashley G. Blount.[36]

One Methodist congregation was active at Hamburg. Levi Coffin, the abolitionist leader, left this picturesque description of a service held at that church:

> I found the meeting house to be a log cabin, with nothing to fill the cracks between the logs. The congregation consisted of eight or ten white people, half a dozen negroes, and several dogs. The men all chewed tobacco and spit on the floor, the women dipped snuff, and the dogs quarreled and fought with each other. The sermon was good, but no one seemed impressed by it except an old Negro woman, who sobbed aloud and rocked herself to and fro.[37]

This service took place about 1850 and offers a northerner's view of southern religion. While Coffin was an educated man, he suffered with many of the northern prejudices held in those days.

In the south central section, a congregation was formed near what is now called the Campground. Local

folklore indicates that many brush arbor meetings were held at that location. Goodspeed credits the Primitive Baptist with having the first church in the county.[38]

Yet, with all the activity, there was not a Baptist congregation of either sect at Savannah by 1841. Reuben Day, a local carpenter, listened to the sermons of three visiting preachers early in the fall of that year. Determining to take the Missionary Baptist faith as his own, Day was baptized in the Tennessee River in November 1841. Already a well-respected politician, elected as chairman of the county court in 1834, he spearheaded the organization of a congregation at Savannah, serving as its pastor in 1844 and 1845.[39]

This group never numbered many, for by 1886 it counted only ten members and no house of worship.[40] Day did point to an increase in religious fervor following the organization of the congregation. That seems, however, to have been shortlived.

As the slavery controversy heated up, the churches found divisiveness within their memberships. Harmony, a Presbyterian congregation, near Cerro Gordo, found itself in this situation. Shortly after the church was founded in 1852, Thomas Polk, an avowed unionist, took others of his convictions away from the church and down the road where they organized another church.[41]

Methodist congregations in the county also split when their national organizations came to a parting of the ways. David Robinson had given land in 1847 for a Methodist Episcopal Church in Savannah. His family were devoted members of this congregation. When the split came, the church became the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Church records show that an early minister left the church to become chaplain to the 57th Tennessee Infantry Regiment (CSA) in 1861.[42]

The county's citizens were only slightly involved in the war with Mexico. Records indicate that no companies were raised in the immediate vicinity. Rather, the men desiring to serve appear to have headed in three directions. Some went to Memphis; others traveled to Columbia or Lewis County; still others went to Alabama. Among the veterans were Robert Russell, Joab Russell, Columbus Harlan, Matthew Cooper, A.T. Short and W.C. Sawyers. Others named were Tillman Pool, Troy Simmons, Bartlett Parnell, A.L.W. Crumby, Thomas Bateman and William R. Porter.[43]

The Mexican War was in another world for the people of Hardin County. As the problems over slavery and emancipation, union and disunion, grew during the next decade, Hardin countians would watch a war begin much closer to home, in their own backyards.

1. *Minute Book C*, 27.
2. *Courier*, 1905.
3. Ibid., 1905.
4. U.S. Government, Senate Document 514, Washington, D.C., 1835.
5. McBride, Robert M. and Dan M. Robison eds., *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly*, (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives and Tennessee Historical Commission, 1975), 1:102.
6. Ibid., 28; *Minute Book A*, 5, 7, 21.
7. McBride, 1:330-31.
8. Corlew, 149.
9. McBride, 1:341; Minute Book C, 271.
10. *Polk*, 6:111.
11. *Minute Book A*, 291.
12. *Minute Book C*, 29, 113, 177.
13. *Minute Book D*, 51, 100.
14. *Polk*, 4:623.
15. Ibid., 5:90.
16. Ibid., 5:100.
17. McBride, 1:478-79.
18. *Minute Book C*, 179.
19. *Polk*, 6:17, 119, 643, 660.
20. Ibid., 5:175.
21. Ibid., 5:129.
22. Ibid., 6:591, 616.
23. Ibid., 8:107.
24. Watson, Monty, "Early History of Hardin County, Tennessee" *Hardin County Historical Quarterly 6*, no. 3 (1988), 1.
25. *Minute Book D*, 229.
26. McBride, 1:679.
27. Campbell, Mary, *The Attitude of Tennesseans Toward the Union, 1847-1861* (New York: Vantage Press, 1961), 279, 283.
28. Campbell, 266, 270.
29. *Courier*, 17 September 1885.
30. *Wills, Inventories, and Settlements, Book D*, 205.
31. Goodspeed, 839.
32. Hays, Tony, "Calliope Song" *Civil War Times Illustrated* December 1987: 34.
33. Savannah Masonic Lodge No. 102, Records, transcribed and summarized by James W. Irwin, original in the possession of the Savannah Lodge secretary, Savannah, Tennessee; *Minute Book C*, 494.
34. Masonic Records, np.
35. Brazelton, 52.
36. Turkey Creek Baptist Church Records, np.
37. Coffin, Levi, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968), 284.

38. Goodspeed, 838.
39. *Minute Book C*, 247; History of West Tennessee Baptist Conference, (Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, 1948), 49.
40. Ibid.
41. Cagle, David, "Harmony Church Records" Hardin *County Historical Quarterly 8,* no. 1 (1991), 34.
42. Methodist Episcopal Church South, Church Records, in possession of church secretary at Savannah, Tennessee.
43. *Courier,* 10 February 1887.

Chapter Five

Freemen and Slaves

Across the south, the number of African-Americans had increased dramatically. Although the legal slave trade had ceased years before, the illicit trade continued and natural reproduction further assisted this growth. According to Corlew, the increase had been so dramatic that whereas in 1790 slaves constituted only one in ten, "by 1860 there was about one black for every three whites in Tennessee."[1]

The status of African-Americans depended upon the timeframe and location selected for study. Slaves on plantations suffered under different rigors than those in the cities of the South. Slaves on smaller farms received different treatment than those on large plantations. In Hardin County the status of slaves and free African-Americans differed from many of the other counties of west Tennessee. With fewer slaves, except perhaps on the western banks of the river, they were looked upon as less of a menace than their brothers in other areas.

The same restrictions applied to the slaves of Hardin County as in other southern counties. A slave could carry a gun on his owner's property, but only if the owner placed a bond for his good conduct.[2] Slaves were able to purchase their freedom, assuming a suitable arrangement could be reached. Harry Hooks, a slave in the Simpson Lee family of Saltillo, had this type of contract with Fanny Lee, Simpson's widow. Harry was a cobbler and was allowed to hire his own time to buy his freedom. Since the contract had been entered into prior to the Act of 1831, which specified that emancipated slaves had to immediately leave the state, Hooks remained in Savannah, becoming something of a fixture over the years.[3]

Apparently, several masters in Hardin County were quite benevolent. One citizen used almost his entire will to outline the disposition of a single slave. John L. Abell's will, dated March 7, 1846 dictated that his slave, Ned, should be given at the death of Abell's wife, Elizabeth, to the Methodist Episcopal Church South. James Graham, David Thompson, and Thomas W. Poindexter were to control Ned on behalf of the church. He could be sold by the "Memphis Conference" of the church, but could not be separated from his wife and children except by his consent.[4] Other instances further support this kind of consideration for African-Americans. In August 1839, Richard Davey's will provided for the emancipation of his slave, Masse, and Masse's mother.[5] Many wills gave slaves the opportunity to select their own masters from among several choices.

Attitudes towards slaves were to change, however, as the slavery debate blossomed. Distrust of African-

Americans in general was reflected in a number of ways. One was the increased legislation regarding human property. Tennessee's slaves' laws were originally based on North Carolina's Slave Code of 1741. As summarized by Corlew, the North Carolina code provided for recognition of a slave as both chattel (property) and person.

> As property [he was] subject to sale like any other property and legally under the control of his owner at all times. But as a person he was also entitled to expect from his master protection against the elements and against other people.[6]

Freed slaves were the focus, however, of the increase in legislation as the American Civil War approached. In 1831 the Tennessee General Assembly prohibited the freeing of slaves unless they relocated from the state. In 1834 freedmen were denied the right to vote. Later acts modified both of these laws in favor of the freedmen, but by 1845, the legislature mandated that emancipated slaves must be transported to the west coast of Africa. Only if the person in question could prove that he/she was incapable of completing such a voyage was the requirement lifted. Four years later the Act of 1831 was restored to the statute books.[7]

Rumors of slave uprisings contributed to the impetus for such legislation, and even Hardin County was not immune to such whisperings. John McCullough Ross, an early settler, wrote to his brother, Charles Walker Ross, in 1857 that patrols had been mounted in response to widespread talk of a slave rebellion in the area:

> [T]har has been a good deale of talk of the Negroes [r]ebeling tho thar has been [d]amage don in this section as I know of they have got out patroles all threw the county and keeps a close watch and I dont think thar is any danger her[e].[8]

Whites found associating with slaves in such activities as gambling were subject to fines. A number of indictments appear in the circuit court minutes during the 1850s charging individuals with inciting slaves to leave their masters. Peter Collins was indicted in 1856 for persuading a slave to leave his master.[9]

A few abolitionists were active in the area. Levi Coffin, the Quaker abolitionist, traveled through Hardin County proposing a scheme for organizing a consortium of free-labor cotton producers. The aim of the group was to show that cotton production could still be profitable, even without the use of slave labor. Crops produced under the plan were to be shipped to Cincinnati for sale. Coffin arranged to use Hamburg as a shipping point for the cotton collected. William Campbell, a merchant in Hamburg, provided storage space. Coffin visited free-labor neighborhoods in Hardin County, thus indicating a number of at least lukewarm abolitionists. Attesting to the success of his efforts, he garnered 263 bales of free-labor cotton from the county.[10]

Statistically, Hardin County did not match up too well with other west Tennessee counties in the number of slaves. Of the 280 slaveholders in the county in 1860, over seventy percent of slaveholders in Hardin County owned five or fewer slaves. Most of the slaves, of course, were on the west side of the river and in Savannah.[11]

The largest slaveholder in the county appears to have been James Walker. Walker owned more than two hundred acres, but beyond the slave schedules of the census records attesting to his slave holdings, little else is known about him. He apparently took no active role in politics, although, as James K. Polk's brother-in-law, there are indications that he was influential in state politics. While Walker's residence is listed in census records as the 1st Civil District, references to Walker in Polk's correspondence indicate that he actually lived in Maury County.[12]

Slave prices were not too different in Hardin County than in the rest of the nation. According to John McCullough Ross, full grown field hands were going for fifteen hundred dollars by the late 1850s.

> James Elit died and his sail was about two weeks ago. Negroes about 9 years old ranged from 1000 to $200 grown ones as high as 1500 dollars one yallow girl sold at 1725 dollars all on a twelve month credit with Note and good security or Notes payabel in Bank.[13]

From a social perspective, differences between slaveholders and small farmers seem slight. One such farmer, Jasper Newton White, stated that a man's character and industry marked him for respect. While slaveholders standing for office usually won, they did so only if they possessed reliable reputations as honest men.[14]

Hardin County had free African-Americans almost from the arrival of the first settlers. Although considered by many whites as a danger to the peace, free African-Americans in Tennessee often owned significant property.

According to Corlew, some 85 percent owned real estate.[15] Harnessed by the many restrictions applied to freedmen in the south, the African-Americans of Hardin County were also accorded the protection of the law when it was possible.

With the majority of the settlers coming from the eastern regions of Tennessee and western North Carolina, it is possible that the lack of any large numbers of slaves in those areas created a more sympathetic atmosphere for free African-Americans. Records document the existence of 34 free African-Americans during the period 1820 to 1860. Those records indicate that authorities in Hardin County adhered to the law in terms of free African-Americans and their few rights.

James Scott, Hardin County's delegate to Tennessee's Constitutional Convention of 1834, was one of only two west Tennessee votes for granting suffrage to free African-Americans. Scott was an active participant in political affairs in the county, named as the county's first attorney general in 1820.[16] His actions indicate at least some support for free African-American rights in the Hardin County area.

Free African-Americans were responsible for obtaining certificates of freedom from the county court. They were also bound out by the court as apprentices. In Hardin County records, during the antebellum period, there are approximately twenty-seven entries relative to free African-Americans. Those entries range from apprentice bonds to emancipation decrees to the issuance of certificates of freedom to the appoint of business agents for African-Americans. The Act of 1806 required

African-Americans to register with the county court in which they resided, therefore many of these entries are dedicated to this kind of action.[17]

The first mention of a free African-American in Hardin County occurs in 1823. On October 8, 1823, Francis Carroll was freed by his master, Jonathan Church, on the basis of a document executed by Church and witnessed by longtime county resident, David Kincannon.[18] Other free African-Americans mentioned in the early pages of the minutes were Margaret Roberts, who was reportedly "badly treated" by Washington Turner and subsequently bound out to local politician James Barnes.[19] Jackson Thompson was bound to Arthur B. Campbell to learn the tanner's trade.[20]

One example of the scrupulous way in which African-Americans' rights were protected was the case of Tilby. This free African-American girl had been bound to William Russell. When her term of service ended in 1841, the county court ordered the sheriff to ensure that Russell complied with the apprentice bond and released Tilby.[21] The fears of slave rebellions spawned by Nat Turner had subsided, and the new fears of the 1850s were a decade away. African-Americans were required to obtain certificates of freedom and, in some cases, have "business agents" appointed to keep them off the public dole. These agents were responsible for hiring the freedman's time and collecting his wages.[22]

One of the few recognizable family units in the free African-American community during this period was the Mitchell family. During the early 1840s, several members of this family were apprenticed to Arthur Campbell.

Campbell seems to have served as something of a guardian to the entire unit. The first mention comes in December 1842 when Campbell was released from his bond for eight year old Nancy Mitchell. Six months later, Campbell was released from his responsibility for seven year old Jackson Mitchell, apparently Nancy's brother, and a Mrs. Mitchell, the pair's mother. John Hannah assumed the position of agent for Mitchell and to see that any monies made by Mitchell were used to pay his bills and to see after Mrs. Mitchell.[23]

Jackson Mitchell must have been fairly successful in earning his way. His name does not appear again in county records until he was granted his certificate of freedom in 1859.[24]

Abby Mitchell, who may or may not have been Jackson's mother, appeared in court the next year and asked that her children William Henry and Manuel Mitchell be bound to Alexander S. Hardin. Manuel had earlier been bound to Henry W. Davis, but Abby Mitchell objected to that since she was not present at the time. She also asked that her son, Jim Mitchell, be bound out to William K. Hardin.[25] It is uncertain as to whether a connection exists between these two Mitchell families. Jim Mitchell, along with his family, received their certificates of freedom the year after Jackson Mitchell.[26]

Another potential member of this clan was Elijah Mitchell, apparently a troublesome young man. Mitchell, described in court records as a "colored orphan age 17," was bound out in 1845 to Alexander Russell. Ten months later, he was bound out to Eldridge Clifton. A year later, he was bound out once more to R.P. Bailey.

The cause for these frequent changes is not mentioned in court minutes.[27]

Other records concerning members of the free African-American community are extant from the 1840s. In May 1844, Cornelius Wilson and his wife, Unity, applied for their certificates of freedom. Unity was the sister of Jack Robertson, who also applied for certificates at that session of the county court. Robertson's wife, Nancy, was the daughter of Elizabeth Franklin, a free African-American woman who had lived in Williamson County for an extended period. Nancy Franklin Robertson was also a sister to Olivia Zachariah who had received her certificate of freedom in 1841.[28]

Times were difficult for free African-Americans in the south, and Hardin County was no exception. Wages were low, often well below the wages paid white workers for similar labor. Free African-Americans were looked on with suspicion. One free African-American woman named Sellers found it difficult to provide for her two children. In July 1847 she watched as her five year old son, Riley Sellers, was bound out to William Russell. Two years later her son John Sellers was bound to John D. Donohoo.[29]

Three free African-Americans in Hardin County deserve special mention; in many ways they epitomize the free African-American experience in the county's antebellum history. Pompey Daniel, a Methodist preacher, Lot Akins, a local troublemaker, and Harry Hooks, the shoemaker, all contributed to the county's history in different ways.

Pompey Daniel was born in North Carolina about

1760. Probably a slave, his early years remain clouded. He entered the ministry in 1797, his first license being signed by Bishop Francis Asbury himself. Freed early in life, Daniel moved into the new lands west of the Smokies and settled in Hardin County sometime prior to August, 1824 when he registered two tracts of land with the surveyor's office: one of 38 acres on Turkey Creek and another of 25 acres on Horse Creek.[30]

Daniel ministered to the needs of the county's African-Americans from some thirty years. Records indicate that he was never forced to put up a bond for his good behavior as were other free African-Americans, and indicative of the respect in which he was held by the church, a long obituary appeared on his death in the *Nashville Christian Advocate*. Although he had lived most of his life in Hardin County, he was buried in Columbia where he had relatives.[31]

Lot Akins first appears in county records during the early 1840s. Constantly in some sort of trouble, Akins was indicted for a number of minor offenses--lewdness, tippling, and running a bawdy house. He also was known to take in runaways, African-American and white. In 1843, the sheriff was ordered to bring to court Robert Bentley, a white boy about 15 who was living at the time with Akins. Bentley was to be bound out as an apprentice to, it may be supposed, a more acceptable master. Records do not indicate, however, if Bentley was ever retrieved from Akins.[32]

Later, during the 1850s, Akins and other free African-Americans were indicted for more serious crimes. Among the most heinous offenses were those of inciting

slaves to leave their masters and gambling with whites. Incidents such as the murder of David Sellars by a slave named Nelson certainly did little to dispel white fears of slave rebellions.[33] During the postwar period, Akins continued his activities, disappearing finally as so many did in those hectic years.

Harry Hooks was the main character in a true 19th century drama. Born a slave in North Carolina, Hooks came west with his master's family, arriving in Hardin County in the early 1820s. He belonged to the Simpson Lee family of Saltillo. As was allowed to a limited extent in those days, Harry, a shoemaker, contracted with his master to hire his own time and purchase his freedom.

He made a partial payment of $200 in 1839, after Simpson Lee's death. Around 1840, local tanner Colonel Arthur B. Campbell purchased Harry from the Lees, with the stipulation that the contract allowing Harry to buy his freedom remain intact. On April 1, 1844, Colonel Campbell petitioned the court to emancipate Harry in accordance with that contract. The petition was granted.[34]

Harry Hooks, however, had married a slave girl. The object of his affection was Betsy, the property of Elizabeth Lee, daughter of Simpson Lee. Having obtained his own freedom, Harry set about earning enough money to buy Betsy from her mistress, a goal he accomplished by 1850.[35]

Having obtained her, unfortunately, he was still unable to free her. Legal technicalities, reminiscent of Catch-22, stood firmly in his way. If he freed her, she would be forced to leave the state in accordance with the Act of 1831 and, in line with later statutes, she would have to be

removed to Africa. Harry was able to produce two respected physicians who testified that Betsy was too ill to make the trip to Africa and should be allowed to remain in the county. The court agreed, and Betsy gained her freedom.[36]

Harry Hooks accumulated a great deal of property, quickly becoming a prosperous businessman in Savannah, and also engaging the buying and selling of slaves [37]. His cobbler's shop sat on the lot now occupied by Ross and Barlow Law Offices, across the street from the courthouse. Harry died in 1863 and was buried in the Savannah Cemetery. Betsy survived him, dying in the summer of 1886.[38]

While the condition of free African-Americans in Hardin County may have been somewhat better than in other areas, it was still only one step removed from slavery. As the decade of the 1850s came to a close, controls on free men of color were tightened, inspiring a proposal in 1858 that would have mandated the removal of all free men to Africa "or the forcible enslavement of all under forty-five years of age."[39]

1. Corlew, 209.
2. *Minute Book G,* 190.
3. *Minute Book C,* 56.
4. *Wills, Inventories, and Settlements, Book D,* 241.
5. Ibid., 165-67.
6. Corlew, 213-14.
7. Ibid., 219-20.
8. John McCullough Ross to Charles Walker Ross, 4 January 1857, original in possession of Winifred Colt, Modesta, California.
9. Hardin County Court, *Circuit Court Minutes Book 1,* 41, 79.
10. Coffin, 279, 284, 291.
11. Campbell, 260-61.
12. *Polk,* 1:7n.
13. Ross to Ross, 4 January 1857.
14. Elliott, Colleen and Louise Armstrong Moxley eds., *Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1985), 5:2174.
15. Corlew, 218.
16. *Minute Book A,* 15.
17. *Minute Book A,* 161; *Minute Book C,* 396, 416; *Minute Book D,* 71.
18. *Minute Book A,* 161.
19. *Minute Book C,* 204.
20. Ibid., 298.
21. Ibid., 374.
22. *Minute Book G,* 187.
23. *Minute Book C,* 519, 558.
24. *Minute Book G,* 261.
25. *Minute Book D,* 84, 148.
26. *Minute Book G,* 287.
27. *Minute Book D,* 156, 209, 278.
28. *Minute Book C,* 396; *Minute Book D,* 71.
29. Ibid., 267, 410.
30. *Survey Entry Book One,* 129, 158.
31. *Nashville Christian Advocate,* (Nashville, TN: privately printed, 1984) 60.
32. *Minute Book D,* 82.
33. Hardin County Circuit Court. *Minute Book B,* 421; Goodspeed, 834.
34. *Minute Book D,* 56, 377.
35. U.S. Census, 1850.
36. *Minute Book F,* 449.
37. Ibid., 449.
38. *Courier,* 12 August 1886.
39. Corlew, 220.

Chapter Six

Secession and the Civil War

As the decade of the forties closed and the fifties opened, the issue of slavery began to come into focus. The debates over the Compromise of 1850 brought the controversy of slave states versus free states to the forefront, bringing an unsettled feeling to politics of the decade. While the Democrats held the legislative seat three of the five terms in the 1850s, the people also elected a Whig for one term and the candidate of an upstart, third party to another.

George M. Hamilton first appears in county records in 1841 when he was elected as a constable.[1] He was licensed as an attorney in April, 1846.[2] A rising young politician, Hamilton replaced Daniel Smith in the state legislature in 1851, but he only served one term. Later, he served some sixteen years as clerk and master of the chancery court. Hamilton died in 1894.[3]

Hamilton was followed in the legislature by Whig Conway Sevier Broyles, son of merchant Lewis Broyles. The earliest mention of Broyles was his presentation of Dr. Joel Casey's will in August, 1853.[4] After the Civil

War, Broyles became a Democrat.[5]

The American Party craze swept through Hardin County in 1854. Also known as the Know-Nothing Party, this group's platform included a ban on all immigration. In Hardin County, the party's strength was sufficient to ensure election of its candidate, Benjamin G. Brazelton.[6] While county voters had given Trousdale a majority in his second race for governor in 1850 and Andrew Johnson carried the county with a safe margin in 1852, Johnson was pressed hard by the Know-Nothing onslaught. His majority in Hardin County shrank to a slim 30 vote margin against the Know-Nothing candidate.[7]

The American party ran its course quickly, and in 1856 Democrat Isham G. Harris carried the county in the gubernatorial election while fellow Democrat James M. Carter replaced Brazelton in the legislature.[h] Hardin County voters also gave James Buchanan a majority in his presidential bid.[8]

With the bulk of the slave population resting on the west side of the river, the secession sentiment was centered in this area. David A. Roberts, a Virginia native who would represent Hardin County in the legislature from 1859 to 1861, spoke on the 4th of July in Nashville in 1850. Said Roberts,

> The fearful elements of discord that now disturb its peace and tranquillity must ere long, unless arrested, result in a strain of the most terrible and

[h] Carter, who changed affiliation to the Unionist Party, also represented Hardin County in the 34th (Confederate) General Assembly. (Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly, Vol. 1).

> disastrous consequences that have ever before afflicted this great nation. . . .
>
> But I greatly fear that the elements of sectional strife now abroad in the land are of a more permanent and terrific character . . .. It may be that as the wheels of time revolve through another year, it may exhibit fields covered with fraternal blood, and the honored flag of our country torn to ribbons and trampled beneath the heel of despotism. We may say it may be so, but I trust it never will.[9]

If Roberts's words were reflective of even a portion of Hardin County's citizens, it is obvious that they felt the divisive struggle deeply. Those prophetic words and forlorn hope would be lived out no more graphically than twelve years hence on the fields of Shiloh, the place where Roberts himself would die.[10]

The clouds of war began to boil and churn over Hardin County just before 1860. Dissension among her citizens over the slavery issue crept into place during the late 1850s as rumors of slave rebellions in the area agitated the citizenry and caused patrols to be mounted.[11]

During the late 1850s and into the new decade, the question was argued loudly and vehemently. The presidential election of 1860 saw only John Breckinridge, Stephen Douglas, and John Bell on the ballot. Breckinridge carried Hardin County.[12] With the election of Lincoln, the debate burst into a fight and sides were quickly taken. In Tennessee, the cannon fire at Fort Summer brought the matter to a head, and a referendum was scheduled to settle the question of secession.[13]

Noel F. Cherry, son of Eli Cherry, contemplated the

confusing state of affair in Tennessee while writing to his parents from Nashville in 1861. Cherry wrote:

> That party[Democrat] failed to get the ascendancy by the vote of the Nation, and have done as Yancy threatened---precipitated the cotton states into a revolution--Secession, the balance of the South--not by majorities, but by influential minorities--sympathized with them until they got on the road to ascendancy and Civil War is the consequence: Americans meet Americans not as brothers but as vilest foes, not to defend each others lives, but to destroy, not to stay the dagger that pierces the vitals of life, but to strike it with all the fury of the madman into the heart that pulsates with the same Saxon blood as his own. Oh how solemn to think of: In this manner as it now is, we cannot hold the administration at Washington guilty of the whole, nor yet can we say it is guiltless of wrong.[14]

Cherry goes on to relate how Nashville reacted to the news of the war, and he details a conversation he had with Tennessee politician Cave Johnson. Asking himself the question: "As the question arises what are we, who want to do right in the Sight of God and man, what are we to do?" he determines that "yet we are now bound to come out in defense of the south even with those things I know least about and never expect to use; the gun and the sword."[15]

In Hardin County, the people were eager to choose sides. Hoisting the banner for the unionists was merchant William H. Cherry. His opposite number appears to have been the Reverend David H. Merryman, a Methodist preacher originally from Wayne County. The pair toured

Hardin County debating the issue, and the whole affair took on the trappings of a county fair.[16]

Judge John Abrams Pitt, a young boy during the secession crisis, described the perception of the "evil" Lincoln held by himself and other youngsters of the period. "We hated 'Abe Lincoln' as the devil hates holy water. He had hoofs and horns and a long forked tail, a demon illy disguised in human form; and this was my conception of him until after his assassination."[17] A number of men maintained their union loyalties up until the state seceded, Pitts's father among them. Upon Tennessee's departure from the union, they announced their loyalty to the South.[18] Merchant John J. Williams was another man who stayed loyal to the Union until secession. With seven sons, Williams stood to lose much in the event of war.

The citizens, following Cherry's lead, voted overwhelmingly against secession. The west side of the river was substantially for separation, but the more populous eastern half carried the day.[19] In fact, of middle Tennessee counties, only Hardin, Macon and Wayne voted against the referendum.[20] With the state now in the Confederacy, the people of Hardin County were treated to a series of banquets, barbecues, and meetings designed to attract young men to the Southern army being raised.[21]

The first of these celebrations was held at Shady Grove Church in the spring of 1861. This was on the west side of the river, northwest of Saltillo. According to Brazelton, horses, little flags attached to their heads, lead a parade for the Southern cause. After the speeches ended, local Southern officials recruited a full company of

cavalry with Charles S. Robertson, a local attorney, as the commander. Other officers were James W. Irwin, son of Savannah's postmaster, James Irwin of Pennsylvania, and Redden W. Reynolds, of Turkey Creek. This company was designated as G Company of the 1st Confederate Cavalry Regiment.[22]

Judge John Pitts also spoke of the festivities surrounding the Confederate recruiting drive:

> I recall the barbecues that were held in our county in 1861, for enlisting volunteers for the Confederate Army; the music of the bands, the long tables spread in the shade of the heavy timbers of the creek bottoms, the flaming patriotic addresses, the yellow stripes down the pants and on the shoulders of the soldiers in their gray uniforms, and the 'cockades' on their Napoleonic hats, and how these crude martial insignia stirred and intoxicated 'us boys,' and especially the girls and young ladies.[23]

Pitts also spoke of an incident on Indian Creek which bears retelling if for no other reason than as an example of the lighthearted spirit that surrounded the early days of the war.

> The tables were ornamented with enormous 'cakes' made not to eat but for show only--made of sawdust with just enough flour to hold the sawdust together, covered with a white coat of so-called 'icing,' surmounted by flags dotted with bright colored figures and emblems--very showy indeed. It happened that after all the real eatables had been consumed, leaving these fine cakes intact, a belated old farmer arrived and asked one who appeared to be a sort of boss of the entertainment--a waggish fellow--for something to eat,

> and was given a slice from one of these ornamental cakes. After the old gentleman had munched on it for a few minutes, this wag asked him how he liked the cake. His reply was, 'Wal, I reckin it's all right, but if it warn't for the name o' the thing I'd jist as leave have a piece o' plain corn bread.[24]

Soon after the company was raised at Shady Grove Church, another was formed in the Hamburg area, designated as Company B of the 34th Tennessee Infantry. After the beginning of hostilities, this company was initially posted to upper East Tennessee; the men eventually saw action at Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge.[25]

The atmosphere at Savannah must have been especially tense. Union officials in Washington considered the town a hotbed of Union sentiment, yet some of the foremost families were Confederate sympathizers. Only William Cherry, of the merchant class, sided with the Union.[26] His wife's family, the Irwins, were ardent Confederates. John J. Williams and others were quick to join the Southern cause. Cherry's sympathies seem closely tied to the economic situation. Within a few months of Tennessee's secession, the flow of goods from the North was shut down. Staple goods, while not yet in short supply, soon became cherished items.[27]

In the shadow of this divisiveness, the recruitment drive continued unabated. In October, 1861, Lieutenant J.W. Phillips organized a light artillery company at Savannah. In November, December, and January, Lt. Col. James M. Crews came over from Memphis under orders

to recruit a full regiment. It was to be designated as the 58th Infantry, but Crews was only able to raise five companies in Savannah. They remained in camp there until early February of 1862. Upon the arrival of Union gunboats, the unit, known as Crews' Battalion, operated as an independent unit, retreating to Murfreesboro before joining Albert Sidney Johnston at Corinth in time for the Battle of Shiloh.[28]

Records indicate that it was only after the Union victory at Shiloh that significant progress was made in recruiting Union units in the Hardin County area. A number of Hardin countians did serve with regiments from Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and other Northern states. They enlisted during the occupation of the county by the Army of the Cumberland.[29]

The early period of the war had been more of a festive affair. While shouts and recriminations were exchanged by both sides, most eyewitnesses remembered it as a time of parades and picnics. The worst was yet to come, however, as Ulysses S. Grant moved to Fort Donelson and Fort Pillow, cutting off river traffic from the North and halting the import of Northern goods to southern merchants.[30]

Prices shot up and staples such as salt, sugar, and coffee became precious indeed. William Cherry, Thomas Maxwell, a local politician, and James C. Green, a Savannah attorney, were the leading Unionists and must have suffered severe discrimination. Cherry's union proclivities are no more evident than in this excerpt from a letter he wrote to Andrew Johnson in March 1862:

> Our county has all the time been loyal and we are

> ready to cooperate with you in anyway to restore the State to its wonted[sic] Loyalty and true position in the Union . . .. I rejoice at the prospect of again seeing our state freed and disintraled [sic] from the blighting curse of Disunionism . . .. Some of us have suffered in Person & property bourne [sic] insult and forced off as refugees yet we are still willing to bear all for the Cause of truth and justice.[31]

In February 1862, after securing Donelson and Pillow, Grant, learning that the Confederates were taking steps to fortify Savannah, begged higher headquarters for another gunboat. His request was granted, and the boats attacked and burned the town of Clifton to the music of calliopes mounted on the boats.[32] Steaming on upriver to Pittsburgh Landing, the gunboats encountered elements of a Louisiana artillery unit. After exchanging fire briefly, they retreated down the river to Savannah where they wired Grant requesting assistance.[33]

The artillery unit remained in place at Pittsburgh Landing for several days. According to the log of the U.S.S. Lexington, the Tyler encountered fire again on March 1st, and the Lexington supported her sister boat in a brief exchange of fire.[34] On March 7, 1862, the Lexington appeared at Pittsburgh Landing again and saw an unexpected sight.

> At 11:05 a.m. came in sight of Pittsburg Landing and discovered that the rebels had up a flag of truce. Answered it and sent the cutter on shore in charge of Mr. Dunn to see what was wanting. Cutter returned in a few minutes with a written communication for Captain Gwin. [35]

Unfortunately, the contents of the message for Captain Gwin have not survived. As late as March 14, 1862, the gunboats were still firing on Confederate positions at Pittsburgh Landing.[36]

After reports of another Confederate build-up at Savannah, William Tecumseh Sherman, in Paducah, Kentucky, dispatched a regiment to occupy the town. The regiment arrived on March 8, 1862, scattering elements of Crews' Infantry Battalion in its path.[37] This minor debacle has gone down in Hardin County history with the picturesque label, "The Battle of Mud Run." The genesis of that name seems to lie in the last will and testament of merchant John J. Williams. The pertinent passage in this lengthy document, which was recorded in 1864, reads,

> I advance to my son James Williams one negro man $800. He sold my goods to Braden for $600. He owes the balance on Stud horse $150, cash advanced him at his grandpa's $60.00 at the time of the Mud Run[38]

Williams was ever the optimist. Besides his careful accounting of every penny owed to him, he also took the time to allow for the distribution of the slaves "that went off with the Federal soldiers or was taken by force of arms by them . . .."[39]

In a telegram to General Henry Halleck on March 16th, Grant announced, "I shall leave for Savannah immediately."[40] He arrived two days later, commandeering William Cherry's house as his headquarters. Once in place, Grant ordered all divisions but McClernand's to Pittsburgh Landing.[41]

Grant's appearance in Savannah changed life as

Hardin countians knew it. William Cherry, vilified just days earlier, was now a man of power. The leading southern sympathizers, including Cherry's mother-in-law Nancy Sevier Irwin, were heckled. In fact, Mrs. Irwin and one of her daughters were imprisoned for their loyalties. Grant, however, immediately had them released and, later, issued orders that they were not to be harassed.[42]

Three problems faced Grant in Savannah. The first was a lack of supplies. He requested coal and forage on his arrival. Corn was also in short supply, and he asked for funds to buy some from local farmers. He also requested that General Henry Halleck send money to buy mules. A second problem was that of slave-stealing. The 13th Iowa was charged with taking two slaves, property of a Savannah citizen. The problem arose again when McClernand's division was ordered to Pittsburgh Landing late in March. Grant must have realized the delicacy of his situation--military commander of a town on the fringe of the deep South with a mostly hostile populace surrounding him. Tactfully and astutely, in both instances, Grant demanded the return of the slaves and the punishment of the men responsible for their theft.[43]

A third problem, and just as much a headache as the first two, was the propensity of his men to take advantage of their role as occupiers. Sherman's division, upon their arrival in Savannah, immediately and forcibly quartered themselves with local families. When Sherman arrived, he ordered them bodily removed. Grant was forced to issue orders forbidding such activities. Soldiers also tended to detain and arrest almost anybody for almost any

reason. Grant found it necessary, and politically expedient at times, to release a number of citizens arrested by those troops as he did with former militia general John Meeks, of McNairy County. Grant complained to Major General C.F. Smith:

> I am sorry there is such a propensity on the part of our Officers to arrest citizens whenever they get out. It is embarrassing to have prisoners against whom there are no charges, brought in, and from the fact that they must be released it is virtually admitting spies within our lines.[44]

Disease ran rampant among the troops at Pittsburgh Landing and Savannah. Army records reflect the intensity with which it affected the soldiers, and it can only be assumed that the citizenry was affected as well. Hospital space was at a premium and Grant commandeered the half-finished Savannah College building as a makeshift infirmary.[45]

William Cherry, however, prospered by Grant's presence. With the General's consent, he was allowed to ship his cotton north and to bring staples back to restock his store. Grant alerted his superiors of his action in regard to Cherry, using Cherry's Unionist loyalties as an explanation.[46] Later, after the Union army moved on, Cherry harangued Military Governor Andrew Johnson about the losses he sustained from both the Union occupation of Savannah and the Confederate forces, suggesting that Johnson could find him a job in the government to help offset his losses.[47]

Grant's sympathies with Cherry edged into another area as well. The army had a great need for buildings.

Naturally, they confiscated most of what they required. Cherry's buildings were exempted from confiscation as were those of his mother-in-law, Nancy Irwin. John J. Williams's blacksmith shop was seized by the Union quartermaster.[48]

Albert Sidney Johnston was at Corinth, Mississippi with his Confederate force. Prepared to strike the Union troops at Pittsburgh Landing, he moved his troops into position during the night of April 5, 1862. Sherman's division lay in the path of Johnston's scouting parties, and in the early morning hours of that Sunday, April 6, the Confederates encountered Union pickets in the vicinity of J.J. Fraley's field, just south of Shiloh Meeting House.[49]

The forces clashed and Grant, eating breakfast at the Cherry House, heard the sound of artillery fire and hurried up the river. Although Union patrols had discovered Rebel forces south of Shiloh, the attack at Pittsburgh Landing was apparently unexpected. Grant, calling for General Lew Wallace to bring his division from Savannah, pushed Sherman and his other divisional commanders to hold their positions.[50] General Albert Sidney Johnston, reconnoitering with the forward elements of his army near the Peach Orchard, was shot and mortally wounded, dying on the battlefield.[51]

Although Wallace had still not arrived by nightfall, the Union army, torn and battered, clung tenaciously to Pittsburgh Landing. During the night, however, General Don Carlos Buell appeared on the east bank of the river and ferried his troops over. Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, Johnston's successor, hesitated to capitalize on the Confederate gains, costing the South the initiative,

and the Union forces, reinforced during the night, retook the field the next day.

Grant sent his casualties down the river to Savannah. Every available building was commandeered for use as hospitals. Nancy Irwin, whose home had been exempted from such use, nevertheless opened her doors to wounded Union soldiers. The Methodist Episcopal Church was also used as a temporary hospital. All the steamboats at the landing were overloaded with the injured. The town was once more overrun by soldiers.[52]

Although elements of the army remained through mid-summer, Grant quickly moved the bulk of his army. The disappearance of the massive army led the county into a different phase of the war. The sound of cannon fire and bugles leading the charge were no longer heard. Rather, the next chapter featured the sniper's bullet and the guerilla's cruelty.

A report by Lieutenant Commander LeRoy Fitch lists the various landings along the Tennessee River from its mouth to Florence, Alabama and offers an estimate of the citizenry's loyalty at each. According to that report, Saltillo and Craven's Landing were considered in Union hands. Eagle Nest Island and Coffee's Landing were Confederate. Savannah was listed as "mixed Union and rebels."[53]

An expedition was mounted the next year by a midwestern unit under the command of Major General G.M. Dodge. The apparent object of this exercise was the destruction of any business or industrial facility encountered in Lauderdale, Wayne, and Hardin counties. While the commanding officer's report of this action is

inconclusive in regard to operations in Hardin County, it may have been this sweep that immobilized and ultimately spelled the doom of the businesses in the Factory Hollow area. Stores and supplies were destroyed in Hamburg, and it was only the reports of a Confederate occupation of Savannah that brought the expedition to a halt as troops were moved north to meet this new threat.[54]

An April 1863 report by Lieutenant Commander Fitch provides a good description of the sporadic expeditions mounted in Hardin County during the latter part of the war:

> I made several landings at places along the route reported to be infested by guerillas, but found none until we reached the neighborhood of Savannah. Being informed that back of Boyd's Landing, about 4 miles, was a cotton factory owned by and doing work for the rebels, I had determined to destroy it. I therefore landed at Boyd's and sent out an expedition numbering about 200 soldiers and sailors. Colonel Griggs took charge of the force.
>
> The executive officer of this steamer, Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Dunn, took charge of the sailors. The expedition moved out to the factory with caution, as Colonel [N.N.] Cox's cavalry regiment was stationed but 2 or 3 miles beyond. Arriving at the mill breastworks of cord wood were thrown up across the road, and enquiries made regarding the operations of the factory.
>
> From what could be learned, the mill was run on shares with the country people. The material went in an indirect way to the rebel soldiers through their friends at home. The books were all clear and contained nothing to condemn the factory, but

knowing that the mill did aid, in an indirect manner, the rebels, it was thought proper not to burn it, but to effectually prevent its doing more work, which was done by removing the running gear, pistons, cylinder heads, brasses, and all like portable portions, and placing it on board this vessel. Two mules and a wagon, which were pressed to haul the machinery down to the boat, were retained as lawful prizes, as it was ascertained they belonged to one of Colonel Cox's rebel cavalry.[55]

Another organized expedition was conducted by Brigadier-General Alfred W. Ellet, USMC, in April 1863. Acting as a diversionary force to cover Major General Dodge's advance on Tuscumbia, Mississippi, Ellet later reported:

> At Savannah, I disembarked my cavalry under the command of Major Hubbard, with orders to proceed eastward to Craven's Mill, a point 18 miles from Savannah, where the rebel Colonel Cox, with his regiment, made their headquarters, and to burn the mill and stores, etc. at the point. The march was effected in the night, the orders executed to the letter.
>
> A large amount of flour, meal, and bacon was destroyed, several of Colonel Cox's pickets captured, and the major returned without any loss.
>
> From Savannah to Clifton we burned several mills and large amount of lumber. I stopped repeatedly and pushed my command back in the interior from various points.[56]

A smaller, yet sharper engagement took place at Cerro Gordo in June 1863. Acting Ensign W.C. Hanford, commanding the U.S. Gunboat Robb, reported to Admiral

David D. Porter, commander of the Mississippi Squadron, about an engagement he instigated with Confederate cavalry:

> On the afternoon of the 18th I suggested to Captain Hurd the possibility of catching some of Colonel Biffle's[i] men if I placed a couple of pieces of artillery at Cerro Gordo, opposite to where they came, and fired across the river during the departure of gunboats from that place. It met Captain Hurd's approval. In the evening I got a horse and rode down to Cerro Gordo, in order to pick out a good situation for the battery. Having found one to suit me, I returned and got my guns mounted on field carriages, and at 10 p.m. started down, and had everything fixed ready, taking particular care to double-picket all the roads against surprise. I sent to man the battery 16 of my best men. It was my instruction in the morning to run down to Saltillo, 5 miles, in order to give the rebs a good chance to come in.
>
> On the morning of the 19th, about 4:30, I heard my guns firing. The *Silver Cloud* and myself started down, where we found that Biffle had made a charge on the battery with 400 men, but my men were prepared for them and opened their ranks well. I have learned since, but it only a picked-up report, that Biffle lost 50 killed and wounded. I believe that their loss was about that, as they charged four abreast (dismounted) and came to within 20 yards of the cannon's mouth, while cannister was being fired into them like rain. I lost, killed, Cranford I. Hill

[i] Colonel Jacob Biffle commanded the 10th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, a portion of General Nathan Bedford Forrest's organization.

> (fireman), and buried him at Craven's landing; Madison M. Hill (second gunner), and John N. Matthews (quartermaster), severely wounded. These I have sent to Smith's and to their homes.[57]

Numerous small skirmishes occurred later in the war, but they were indeed small in comparison with these movements. The conflict then moved into the even darker realm of guerilla warfare.

It took almost a year after Shiloh for the specter of the guerilla to cast its pall over Hardin County. As with so many border states, the most venerable guerillas were those from the immediate area. When the first Confederate units were raised in the area, these soon-to-be guerillas served honorably, for a while anyway, before degenerating into little more than armed bands.

Lieutenant Commander Fitch spoke to the difficulties of operating in this guerilla-infested area:

> I would state that all men along the river above Fort Henry must be either disloyal in sentiment or actually engaged in the rebel cause from what the numerous refugees tell me. None expressing sentiments the least loyal are permitted to remain at their homes or cultivate their farms.
>
> Since so many of these guerillas have been found dead on the battlefield, with the oath of allegiance in their pockets, I am forced to believe no man living with these guerillas, though he had taken the oath forty times.[58]

A letter from Edwin Philips to Andrew Johnson in May 1862 related to Johnson something of the tension in the area. He noted that "the people are suffering very much

by oppression of rebel people."[59]

During late 1863 or early 1864, Captain William Berton Hays of the 21st Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, and a prewar resident of Hardin County, disappeared with his company.[60] Whether they became lost on a scouting patrol or whether they deserted is unknown. What is known is that Hays turned up back in Hardin County leading a group of bushwackers.

Bert Hays, as he came to be known, was the son of Wallis Hays, a farmer in the southeastern section of the county. Both Bert and his brother, Lawson, served in the Confederacy; both were officers.[61] The elder Hays owned a plantation not far from the Tennessee River. His pro-Southern sentiments were well known in the neighborhood as referenced by Fitch in April 1863:

> Returning down the river I stopped at a farm belonging to a notorious rebel by the name of Hays, who has been very zealous in enforcing the conscript law and feeding the guerillas. Sent a detachment 3 miles back to his house and brought away about 1,000 pounds of bacon and all the corn we could carry; also three mules and a wagon belonging to him. Colonel Griggs [U.S. Marines] took charge of the bacon, as the army at Fort Hindman [Heiman] were short of supplies.[62]

Shortly after the disappearance of Bert Hays's cavalry company, he reappears in the Tennessee-Alabama border counties, participating at least marginally, according to folklore, in operations conducted by a Captain Emerson of General John Hunt Morgan's staff. Records do not bear this out, though the scarcity of such documents does not

make this a telling point.

Operating in Hardin and Wayne counties in Tennessee, and in Lauderdale County, Alabama, Hays terrorized the citizenry for two years. At Clifton, the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment was raised with the major responsibility of combatting Hays's party. They, too, soon earned the reputation of being no more than bushwackers.[63]

While numerous murders were laid at the feet of Hays's gang, perhaps the most notable was that of Morgan Hood Ross. Shortly after returning from a business trip to Mississippi in April 1864, Ross was accosted in the living room of his house just south of Savannah. According to Ross's grandson, Ross wrestled with Hays himself until one of the gang shot and killed him.[j] Isaac Jefferson Ross, Morgan's teenaged son, was hiding in the next room. Only the speed with which he fled the house spared his life.[64]

The so-called Battle of Holland's Creek was probably the largest, single skirmish in this shadowy conflict. Having stopped early one Sunday morning to steal supplies from a family on Holland's Creek, the Hays gang let one of the women slip away from them. The girl alerted the people along the creek, including several Union soldiers home on leave. The bluecoats rushed to the aid of their neighbor, and the firefight raged up and down the creek all morning. Some accounts claim ten men were killed. Finally, the soldiers were able to dislodge Hays from the creek and the guerilla retreated with his band into

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[j] Hays and one other man were indicted for Ross's murder after the war, but as both suspects were dead, the case was dropped. (Information provided by Jo Alice Morey, of Milledgeville, TN)

Alabama.[65]

Only one Union guerilla is ever mentioned in connection with Hardin County. The enigmatic "Doc" Mangum is referred to in Goodspeed's history of the county, however the appellation "Doc" is the only name given.[66] Several Mangum families lived in Hardin County at the time of the war, but without more details, further identification is impossible. Interestingly, as opposed to Hays about whom a plethora of stories are told, no specific crimes have been attributed to Mangum.

Company B of the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment, garrisoned at Clifton, was given the nickname "The Buttermilk Rangers" for their scavenging activities, which occasionally included murder. According to Pitts:

> It was only a few days after the establishment of the garrison at Clifton, that the Federal soldiers began to forage and scout in our neighborhood. The homes and farms of Confederate soldiers were the first attacked--those of Union men were passed by. Our corn cribs and smokehouses were first emptied--and when I say emptied, I mean just what I say. Every ear of corn, bundle of fodder or oats or wisp of hay, and every ham, side or shoulder of bacon, and pound of lard--all sausage, in fact, everything eatable was taken, including molasses, butter and milk; and later, the live stock--horses, mules, cattle, sheep, hogs, chickens, ducks, guineas, turkeys--everything but the houses and furniture and farming implements.[67]

The county was also subject to the operations of Colonel Fielding Hurst's 6th Cavalry Regiment. Four companies of this command were enlisted in Hardin County. Known locally as "Hurst's Worst," they were

accused of numerous atrocities by General Nathan Bedford Forrest. While his actions were criticized by many, Hurst stayed in favor with the more fervent Unionists and was appointed to the judiciary after the war.[68]

The people found a variety of hardships to overcome. Staples became virtually unavailable, and when they could be found, their cost was prohibitive. Hard money was scarce as well. Maintaining a farm was almost impossible because of the constant scavenging by both armies and guerillas.[69]

The local salt supply ran out quickly. Hungry for the item, the people began to leach salt from the dirt in their smokehouse where meat had been cured. Two to three years went by for some families without salt. Stories are told of salt smuggled into the county by profiteers. John Pitts wrote of buying salt for $40 a bushel towards the end of the war.[70]

Keeping mules and other livestock was as much a problem as obtaining salt. Young boys were often detailed to take the family mules into the canebrakes and sit with them when troops or guerillas were on the prowl. Jeff Ross, son of Morgan H. Ross, often said his education was acquired while sitting with the mules in those canebrakes.[71] Chickens, cattle, and sheep were fair game for scavenging soldiers and renegades.[71]

For males, dodging Confederate drafting parties often became a full-time occupation. Forced enlistments were the order of the day. John C. Welch, a man of about sixty, is said to have hidden under the floor of his Rogers' Creek cabin as one such party approached. His wife, Lydia,

placed a rocker over the trapdoor and sat in it to divert attention. Another man in the same neighborhood is said to have been shot jumping over a fence in flight from the 'draft board.'[72]

The confiscation of food and supplies forced people into elaborate schemes to hide these items. John Pitts's family was able to hide a bale of cotton for a number of years.[73] Receipts detailing the confiscation of some item or other by Union and Confederate troops are still floating around the county.

The end of the war brought little change to conditions in Hardin County. Other than the return of the veterans, there seemed to be almost as much pillaging and sniping as during the conflict. Former soldiers of both sides seemed intent on continuing the war, and some took every opportunity to harass their former enemies.[74]

Hard money was in short supply. A few, like John Pitts's family, had hoarded a bale of cotton, and the sale of these provided the first real cash they had in four years. Pitts wrote,

> I was enabled . . . to accompany a neighbor, Mr. James Watson, on a trip of more than twenty miles, through the snow on horseback, to a point above Savannah, where we bought some salt, the first we had in two or three years, and for which we paid $40 a bushel."[75]

The county court met only sporadically during 1863 and 1864. It held session fairly regularly until the summer of 1862 and the departure of Union troops. Although Watson indicates that the justices moved the court to Oldtown (Hardinsville) and met there during the

war, extant minutes from the sporadic sessions show the court meeting at Savannah as late as February, 1864.[76]

The courthouse burned in 1864 and a temporary shelter was erected shortly thereafter. County Court Clerk James D. Martin is credited with having saved the county records from the burning building.[77] Although the courthouse was not completely destroyed by the fire, the origins of which have never been fully explained, the court decided to build a new structure. Anthony Gholston received the contract and turned the finished product over to the county in 1869. Brick from the earlier building may have been used in the new one.[78]

The close of hostilities came to Hardin County without the picnics and celebrations that welcomed the war's arrival. Four years of unrelenting hardship left Hardin countians with the need to step back and take a breath, to rest, but although the war had ended, conflict was still in the air.

1. *Minute Book C*, 415.
2. *Minute Book D*, 187.
3. McBride, 1:323; *Courier*, 22 February 1894.
4. *Minute Book F*, 279.
5. McBride, 1:91-2.
6. Ibid., 1:76.
7. Campbell, 270, 272-273.
8. Campbell, 272-273, 283; McBride, 1:127.
9. "Fourth of July Speech" *Hardin County Historical Quarterly 4*, no. 3 (1986), 18.
10. McBride, 1:625.
11. Ross to Ross, 4 January 1857.
12. Campbell, 286.
13. Corlew, 293.
14. Noel F. Cherry to Eli and Julia Ward Cherry, 25 April 1861. Original in he possession of John J. Ross, Jr., of Savannah, Tennessee.
15. Cherry to Cherry, 25 April 1861.
16. *Courier*, 17 September 1885; Hitt, 78.
17. Pitts, 93.
18. Ibid., 92.
19. Brazelton, 60.
20. Corlew, 295.
21. Pitts, 94; Brazelton, 60-61.
22. Brazelton, 61.
23. Pitts, 94.
24. Ibid., 94-95.
25. Civil War Centennial Commission, *Tennesseans in the Civil War* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1964; repr. 1985), 1:246-48.
26. Sword, Wiley, *Shiloh: Bloody April* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1974), 116.
27. Pitts, 104.
28. *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, 1:163-64.
29. Simon, John Y. ed. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 4:406. (Hereinafter referred to as Grant).
30. Hitt, 79.
31. Graf, Leroy P. and Ralph W. Haskins, eds. *The Papers of Andrew Johnson* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 5:246-47. (Hereinafter referred to as Johnson).
32. Pitts, 95-6.
33. Sword, 9.
34. ORN, 22:785.
35. Ibid., 22:783.
36. Ibid., 22:784.
37. *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, 1:163-64.

38. Hardin County Court, *Will Book 2*, 9-11.
39. Ibid., 10.
40. *Grant*, 4:377.
41. Ibid., 406.
42. Ibid., 407n.
43. Ibid., 384, 437.
44. Ibid., 385, 425.
45. Sword, 430; Hays, 34.
46. *Grant*, 448, 449n; U.S. War Department, *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, 1st ser. v. 10, pt. 2:80.
47. *Johnson*, 324.
48. *Grant*, 407n.
49. Sword, 142.
50. Pitts, 99.
51. Sword, 269-71.
52. Ibid., 430.
53. *ORN*, 24:60.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., 63.
56. Ibid., 530.
57. Ibid., 189.
58. Ibid., 64.
59. *Johnson*, 4:427.
60. *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, 1:99.
61. Ibid, 2:197.
62. ORN, 24:64.
63. Pitts, 103.
64. Brashear, Charles, *George Ross: Revolutionary War Soldier* (San Diego: np, 1993), 54-55.
65. Pruitt, Wade, *The Bugger Saga*, Columbia, Tennessee: .
66. Goodspeed, 836.
67. Pitts, 103-104.
68. *The WPA Guide to Tennessee*, (1939), (New York: Viking Press, 1939; repr. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 416.
69. Pitts, 105-107.
70. Ibid., 115.
71. Morgan Ross, interviewed by author, 6 September 1987. Author's notes.
72. Mamie Crotts, interviewed by author, 16 June 1984. Taped.
73. Pitts, 115.
74. Pitts, 116-23.
75. Ibid., 115.
76. *Minute Book G*, 483, 484, 487, 488.
77. McBride, 2:604.
78. Williams and Patterson, 5.

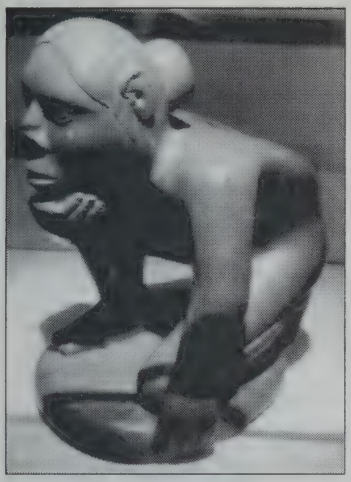
Chapter Seven

Reconstruction

Governor William G. "Parson" Brownlow's appointees to county office took their oaths in July 1865. N.M.D. Kemp, a former Union captain, was named sheriff. Bollis Hinkle was selected as county court clerk, and Samuel Broyles was appointed register. A tax base was quickly established and county government moved forward.[1]

Court minutes during the immediate postwar period show an expected increase in the appointment of estate administrators, as the estates of deceased soldiers were settled. Another increase was seen in the sale of land to pay debts. Petitions to sell land from estates to settle claims were numerous during those first months.[2]

Politically, the Democratic party was silent. Hardin County was represented by unionist Thomas Maxwell in the 34th General Assembly, dubbed the "Reconstruction" assembly. Maxwell, a farmer, served as a constable during the decade preceding the war. Maxwell was wounded



Effigy Pipe
Source: Ronney R. Brewington



Hank DeBerry
Source:
Ronney R. Brewington



Nancy Irwin
Source: Cornelia Jordan



Bert Hays
Source: Pictorial History



Early Main Street Savannah Source: Henry E. Williams



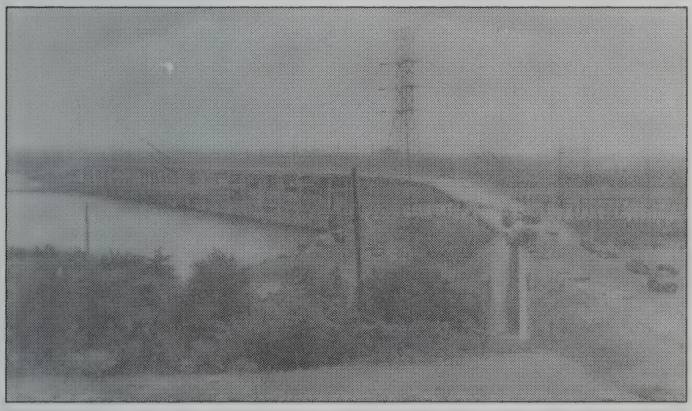
Hardin County Courthouse (1906) Source: Henry E. Williams



Courier Office Source: Pictorial History



Milo Lemert Memorial Bridge Source: Pictorial History



Pickwick Dam Bridge Source: Pictorial History



Tennessee River Frozen (1918) Source: Henry E. Williams



Graham House Source: John J. Ross



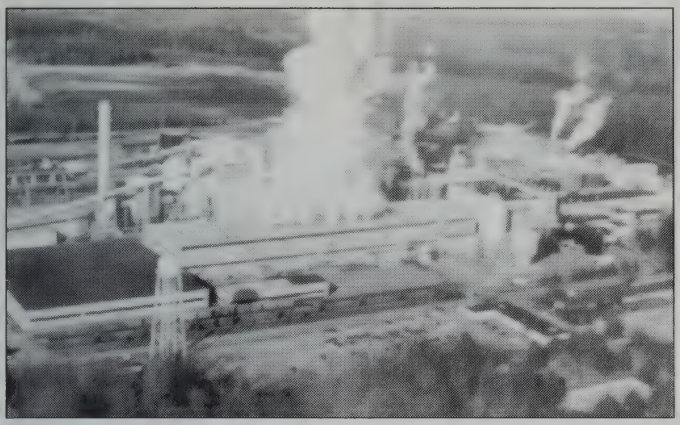
James Graham

Source: John J. Ross

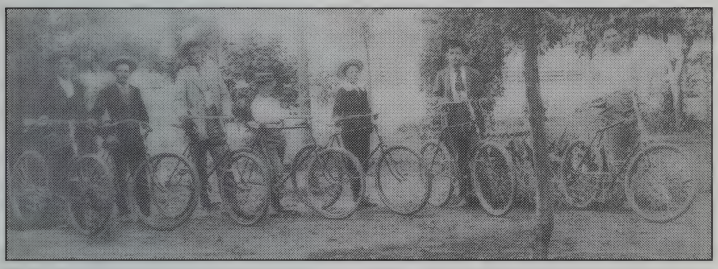


John J. Williams

Source: John J. Ross



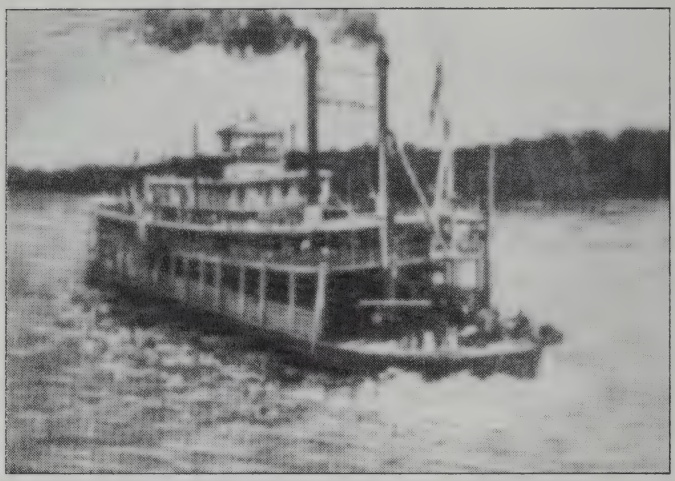
Packing Corp. of America Source: Pictorial History



Bicycle Club
Drew Hitt, Jim Fraley, George Crawford, James Barlow,
Earnest Churchwell, Frank Black, Charlie Doran
Source: John J. Ross



Back row: DA or TJ Welch, EW Ross, Arch Patterson,
JW DeBerry, WE Rogers. Front row: Edgar Cherry, Al Watson,
Val Waller, Dr. JK Barlow, HE Williams
Source: John J. Ross



City of Saltillo (substitution) Source: Pictorial History



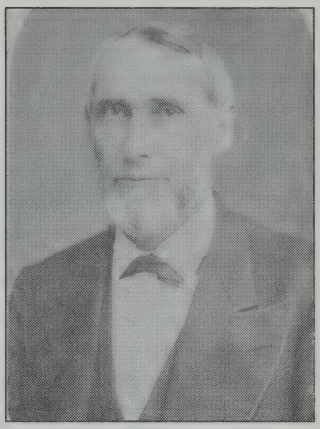
Steamboats at Pittsburg Landing

Source: John J. Ross



James Madison Cherry

Source: John J. Ross



William Harrell Cherry

Source: John J. Ross



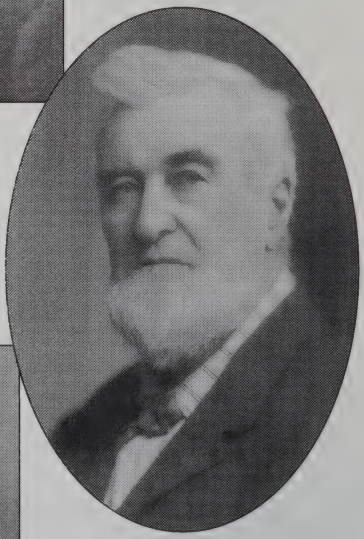
Eli Cherry Stage Coach Stop

Source: John J. Ross



W. E. Rogers

Source: John J. Ross



Judge Thomas P. Bateman

Source: John J. Ross



Lon Scott in Washington

Source:
Henry E. Williams

while acting as a guide for Union soldiers in 1862.[3]

A number of former Democrats changed affiliation as their party lost favor. Among these was Maxwell's successor in the legislature, Alfred Pitts. Like Maxwell, Pitts was a farmer and served in a number of local offices--constable, justice, chairman of the county court. He lost an earlier bid for the state legislature to Conway Sevier Broyles, a Whig, in 1853. Elected to the general assembly in 1867, Pitts did so as a Republican.[4]

One of the major difficulties facing the people was the continued violence that permeated society. Union and Confederate veterans refused to lay the war aside. They harassed each other at every opportunity. For some unexplained reason, from 1867 to about 1870, the county court found it necessary to hire bodyguards for the various sheriffs that served during this period. J.R. Abernathy, J.R. Coffman, John D. Donohoo, and T.J. Phillips were among the men hired for this duty.[5] This could only be a reaction to the violence pervasive throughout the county.

George Hardin, from the northeast section of the county, was shot from his saddle early one Sunday morning. John F. Journey was assaulted by two former Union soldiers, and then was sued when he defended himself.[6] Samuel Broyles was allegedly shot and killed on Main Street in Savannah by Tobe Thornton, a former Confederate guerrilla.[7]

Some men used the time to settle old scores, as was the case with Bert Hays. While Hays ceased his activities at the end of the war, many people still felt they owed him something for all the pain he had caused. Of the many tales surrounding Hays' death, one is that Hays was

preparing to cross the river just south of Savannah. Unknown to him, a group of vigilantes was waiting on the far bank. When his boat touched shore, they opened fire, killing him instantly. Another story, circulated by Hays' descendants, is that Hays was killed behind the barn on the old Cantrell farm. The only valid record of his death is the report of an inquest jury returned to the county court in summer, 1868. That report stated that Hays was indeed killed by multiple gunshot wounds. It gave none of the circumstances nor the location of the incident.[8]

Another episode worthy of retelling was the habeas corpus debacle surrounding John W. Northcutt. A private in the 8th Tennessee Mounted Infantry, stationed at Savannah, Northcutt along with a companion named Beckham encountered two men--Scott and Kimbrough--near the Wayne-Lawrence county lines in the spring of 1865. Later, Northcutt alleged that Scott and Kimbrough were in Confederate uniforms. Shots were exchanged and Kimbrough was killed. Scott escaped unharmed.[9]

In early 1866, Scott (his first name has gone unrecorded) appeared before the Lawrence County Circuit Court and secured an indictment against Northcutt and Beckham for the murder of Kimbrough. Beckham had left the region and the sheriff of Lawrence County forwarded Northcutt's indictment to Charles W. Shipman, then sheriff of Hardin County. Shipman, who had been Northcutt's commanding officer in the 8th Tennessee Mounted Infantry, arrested Northcutt on the charge of murder in early 1867.[10]

Confined to the jail at Savannah, Northcutt prepared a petition, appealing for the writ of habeas corpus, for

circuit court judge Fielding Hurst. Essentially, Northcutt through his petition demanded to see the evidence against him, forcing Shipman to justify his incarceration. The petition was filed on March 11, 1867. Hurst quickly issued an order to Shipman to show cause for detaining Northcutt or, failing that, to release Northcutt. Shipman responded to Hurst, saying that "the Attorney General must state [that] he has no proof to sustain the charge in the indictment." The attorney general provided such a statement in short order, but Shipman still balked at releasing Northcutt.[11]

Judge Hurst then issued subpoenas for Riley Patterson, Isaac B. Northcutt, and James M. Dickerson. Isaac Northcutt testified that Scott, whom he knew to be a Confederate soldier at the time of the incident, had approached him and offered to drop the charges against Northcutt for four hundred dollars and the whereabouts of Beckham. For some unknown reason, Shipman still refused to release Northcutt, pointing, feebly it may be supposed, to the original indictment for the murder of Kimbrough. By that date, April 19, 1867, the indictment had been dropped and Shipman finally released Northcutt after 159 days of incarceration.[12]

Such cases point up the ambiguity of the times. Shipman's refusal to release Northcutt until the last possible moment speaks, perhaps, to some personal feud between the sheriff and his former subordinate. Loyalties were confused and muddled in those uncertain times.

During the late 1860s, many of the county's young men saw no future in a defeated South and chose to go elsewhere. Others were forced by chance to seek a home outside the county. Robert Clay Allison, who became

known as one of the Wild West's wildest men, was one of those who found the Hardin County of 1868 too tame. Having spent time as a scout in the latter stages of the war, Clay was too restless to remain on the Allison farm in the northeast section of the county and so he made his way into Texas and the history books. Sterling Welch, son of Lewis Welch and brother of D.A. and T.J. Welch, left the county.[13]

The presence of Reconstruction troops caused difficulties. Captain C.W. Shipman's company of the 8th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment was posted at the Hardin College building until almost a year after the war had ended.[14] Detachments of "Parson" Brownlow's militia were in Waynesboro. Selmer had at least one unit. The presence of these units was salt in the wounds of diehard Confederates.[15]

The Ku Klux Klan was founded in the chaos of the postwar period with General Nathan Bedford Forrest at its head. Officially dedicated to assisting in the enforcement of laws and the defense of those unable to defend themselves, Klan activity was especially heavy in Maury, Lincoln, Giles, Marshall, Humphreys, Obion, Hardeman, Fayette, Gibson, and Dyer counties.[16]

No specific references to the Ku Klux Klan in Hardin County have been found. The few general references to the Klan in the area are linked to Brownlow's militia units stationed in the region. One confirmed incident occurred at Waynesboro, but could have included Hardin countians. Brownlow's militia, housed in the courthouse, fired upon a group of parading Klansmen who returned the fire.[17] Judge John Pitts has claimed only that the Klan's

influence in the region was totally wholesome. It must be remembered that this is the opinion of a son of a Confederate soldier and former slaveholder.[18]

The citizens were slow to move out of the war. Neither the Freedman's Bureau nor carpetbaggers played a vital role in postwar history. Apparently, Savannah and the county were not considered prize enough to warrant their attentions.

The construction of the new courthouse and the reopening of the river trade began to bring the county back to an even financial keel. A number of business houses had opened shortly after 1870. A family of Pennsylvanians, the DeFords, established a wool factory in Savannah, but they had lived in the South for several years and sons of the family had served in the Union Army.[19]

By 1870, a number of businessmen had settled in the county. Savannah had two hotels--John N. Kindel's inn on the banks of the Tennessee and Reuben East's hotel. James Reed ran a wagonmaker's shop. Rufus and William Russell and David Crook were saddlers. John Eccles owned a photography studio, and Parris Still, a Kentucky native, was a silversmith. Jim Winborn owned the tailor shop where Judge Elijah Walker was known to spend time.[20] Among other Reconstruction-era lawyers were Archibald McDougal, Hundley Broyles, James Porterfield, and George Hamilton. John Scheuber, a German native, built cabinets as did Richard Ruth.[21]

North of Savannah, the town of Saltillo was coming into its own, and to the south, near Shiloh, the town of Hamburg was also prospering. The county now had three

thriving towns. Crops were rebounding from the scant harvests of the wartime years. While the small farmer lacked hard money, he had produce with which to barter. Lewis Welch and Sons advertised in 1873 that they would "barter anything in their line for all kinds of country produce." H.E. Williams, on the other hand, offered special inducements to cash buyers. Columbus H. DeFord and Henry R. Hinkle ran a "CHEAPCASH STORE!" although they also announced that they would "pay cash or exchange any of our goods for hides, furs, chickens, turkeys, eggs, butter, potatoes, turnips, meal flour, beeswax, tallow rags, ginseng, wood and in fact, everything worth selling."[22]

Doctors Robert Hardin and William Seaman advertised their joint practice, and George W. Shipman, John A. Pitts, and J.M. Porterfield were just three of the many attorneys in Savannah.[23] The former Confederates, those prosperous before the war, seem not to have lost too much. Those who were merchants before, remained merchants afterwards. They apparently retained their reputations in the communities.

The end of Reconstruction provided an opportunity for the people to move forward and begin the healing process. The county had changed. Many families now had female heads, a byproduct of the war, but these women, made strong by necessity, kept their families together the best they could. The dawn of the 1870s brought the end of Reconstruction--as Tennessee's Conservative legislature began to halt the Radical program--and renewed hope, an emotion the people sorely needed.

1. *Minute Book G,* 496.
2. *Minute Book G,* 65, 106, 115,146, 169, 368.
3. McBride, 2:612.
4. Ibid., 2:728-29.
5. *Minute Book G,* 529, 665, 702.
6. Pitts, 121-22.
7. Goodspeed, 834.
8. *Minute Book H,* 2 July 1868. Information provided by Edgar Byerly, III, Waynesboro, TN.
9. Hardin County, Tennessee, Circuit Court Case Files, State of Tennessee v. John W. Northcutt, Microfilm, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. *Minute Book H,* 289.
14. *Tennesseans in the Civil War,* 1:360.
15. Pitts, 122-23.
16. Corlew, 337.
17. Pitts, 123.
18. Ibid., 123.
19. Hitt, 31-32.
20. Pitts, 139.
21. U.S. Census, 1870, Hardin County, Tennessee.
22. *Tennessee River News,* 22 July 1873.
23. Ibid.

Chapter Eight

The County Moves Forward 1870 - 1900

The 1870s brought a renewed vigor to life in Hardin County. Rising young men, hardened by combat, sought places for themselves in the postwar world. Captain James W. Irwin, the sons of John J. Williams, R.D. DeFord, Edmund D. Patterson, all veterans of the war, staked out claims in the business and professional life of the county. A plethora of professional men opened for business during the 1870s. The medical sector, in particular, was dynamic. Dr. Robert A. Hardin split from Dr. William Seaman. Dr. George C. Morris was practicing at Hamburg. A yellow fever epidemic struck the county in the latter part of the decade causing numerous deaths. Memphis and Savannah were both under quarantine in 1879.[1] Other physicians of the period were J.T. Motley, A.J. Woolverton, and W.E. McDougal. T.L. Westerfield practiced dentistry.[2] The surge in river traffic promised a new economic prosperity, something for which the people

were more than ready.

The first steamboat to successfully navigate the Tennessee from Paducah to Knoxville was the Atlas, which completed its journey March 3, 1828.[3] By Reconstruction days, steamboating on the Tennessee was reaching its peak. During the 1870s and on until the end of the century, the county's economy depended on the river to move produce to market, bring new goods in, and provide transportation for her citizens. No railroads would be run into the county until after 1900, and so the river became the sole means of quick and efficient transport and communication during the postwar period. Nine river landings lay within the boundaries of the county--Swallow Bluff, Saltillo, Coffee, Savannah, Crump, Pittsburgh, Nelson, Hamburg, and Boyd.

A number of packet boats ran the Tennessee River. The Evansville and Tennessee River Packet Company, the Paducah and Florence Packet Company, and the St.Louis and Tennessee River Packet Company were among these.[4] As early as 1873, the steamer *Dick Johnson* made regular trips as far south as Florence and Eastport and as far north as Paducah, Kentucky. Joining the *Dick Johnson* on her weekly trips was the *Rapidan*.[5]

Merchants were heavily dependent on these steamers to provide them with new stock. A flood in 1879 prevented the boats from making their regular stops. Newspaper editors of the period comment on the hardship this posed to area merchants, thus underlining the important role played by river traffic in the county's economy.[6]

The St. Louis and Tennessee River Packet Company

became the preeminent force in steamboating on the Tennessee during the late 1800s. Boats owned by this company included the *Tyler,* the *W.H. Cherry,* the *City of Florence,* and the *City of Savannah,* which had her trial run on October 22, 1889.[7] Four hundred people gathered at the landing in Savannah as the city's namesake boat docked for the first time. Among her crew were Captain Lem Hill, pilots Harry Crane and D.W. Kirkpatrick, and steward David Welsh. Banker Henry Williams made the welcoming address.[8]

Hardin countians made good use of the river as a transportation route, evidenced by this selection of newspaper notes:

> Jacobus S. Jones and wife returned home from Washington on the Clyde. Miss Bettie Howard of Lexington and Miss Adra Hinkle of our town left on the Clyde to visit friends in Native Americana.[9]
>
> Messrs. Tom Williams and Lute Pack, who have been on a visit from Texas, and our townsman H.E. Williams left Monday, on Str. Silver Cloud, bound for Fort Smith, Ark.[10]
>
> Mrs. W.H. Cherry and Mrs. Dr. Hardin took passage on the Clyde Sunday on their way to their homes in Nashville.[11]
>
> Mrs. D.A. Welch, who, for the past month, has been visiting her sisters, Mrs. W.H. Cherry and Mrs. Dr. Hardin, of Nashville, and her niece, Mrs. Mahlon Stacy, of Wales, Tenn., returned home by Str. Gilbert Friday. [12]

Farm supplies were often part of the freight imported by the steamboats.

Str. Clyde from Evansville arrived Sunday morning in place of the Silver Cloud which was crippled near Caseyville, Kentucky. She discharged a heavy cargo of plantation supplies for our merchants.[13]

Despite this dependence on the river, the rise of Knoxville and Chattanooga as population and economic centers played little part in Hardin County affairs, possibly as a result of the rough navigation at Muscle Shoals. More important to the county than either of these were Paducah, Kentucky and St. Louis, Missouri. Nashville and Memphis, naturally, assumed an importance because of their proximity, and Cincinnati had a lesser impact.

During the later years of the century, progressive citizens talked about railroads, and the possibility of a line running through the county excited many of the people. The least hint that Hardin County was being considered for a line incited the lust for the railroad. Personnel changes at the railroad companies--the appointment of new managers, new chairmen of the board--were carefully scrutinized to determine what those changes might mean to the county's chances. Comments such as, "Rich Welch went to town Tuesday full of railroad talk," were common in the newspaper.[14]

The people would ultimately be disappointed in their hopes, at least in the short term, and were forced to continue to depend on the steamboat for transporting goods and produce to market.[15]

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the riverboat companies made a brave effort to regain their strength, but the ever-increasing miles of rail took a toll on the majestic steamers. In a last ditch stand, the companies

invested large sums of money into new boats, filling them with the latest in technological innovations.[15] Ultimately, they were to lose out to the low-cost, low-maintenance barges and towboats, plus the rise of the automobile as a mode of personal transportation. Echoing this were an ever-increasing series of comments in the Courier: "The towboat Buckeye Boy with 4 barges loaded with ties for the Evansville Grain Co. passed down Monday afternoon."[16] Less pretty, but more economical, the sooty barges replaced the steamboats as river transportation for lumber, cotton, and other market goods, although it would be 1942 before the death knell finally sounded for the packet companies.[17] The citizens, suffering from the lack of a railroad, and now from the declining passenger traffic on the river, strongly felt the corner into which circumstance had painted them.

Although the days of the boats were fading, many memories cling to those graceful vessels. People still remember their names, handed down by parents and grandparents, names like the *Clyde,* the *Edgar Cherry*, the *Silver Cloud,* the *City of Savannah,* and the *Rapidan.* According to historian Frank B. Williams, steamers played an important role in a Savannah Christmas tradition. The local citizens would order their alcoholic beverages from northern points in time for the holiday season. On the appointed day, they would gather at the Savannah landing, perhaps testing the local wares, and waited for the arrival of the steamer. Occasionally, the cry would go up, "Has the boat blowed?," and an affirmative or negative would come in reply. Finally, the cry was no longer heard, and the steamboats passed down the river

forever, replaced by the more efficient, yet far less romantic diesel tugs.[18]

As the Tennessee legislature wiped away the legal remnants of Reconstruction, the political situation in Hardin County began to approach some form of normality.[19] The last half of the 19th century saw little change from election to election with the Democratic party making only minor, though significant, gains before the end of the century. African-Americans were not a factor in Hardin County politics during Reconstruction. Although a handful became well-known, if not successful, businessmen, they did not emerge on the political scene during the remainder of the century.

The Democrats, totally shutout in the first years after the war, found some renewed strength when the shock of the conflict wore off. It would be 1874, however, before the county sent a Democrat to the state legislature, although a reformed Democrat, Alfred Pitts, was one of the first elected after the war.[20]

Membership in the parties was predominantly along the lines of wartime loyalty. Those who supported the Union tended to be Republicans, those who sided with the South, Democrats. Former Confederates, E.D. Patterson, J.W. Irwin, Edgar Cherry, son of William H. Cherry, and others led the county Democratic party. Unionists Thomas Maxwell, Riley Patterson, and Alfred Pitts formed the nucleus of the Republican party.[21]

Other, younger men also took part in politics. The first postwar Democrat to go to the legislature was twenty-two year old Daniel William Herring. Elected in 1874, Herring was a Savannah product, the son of John J. and Julia

Herring. After his single term in the lower house, he secured an appointment from President Grover Cleveland as chief consul in Honduras. Later, he served in the judiciary at Jackson, where he died in 1923.[22]

Judge E.D. Patterson deserves special mention. A native of Elyria, Ohio, he came south before the war. Taking the southern cause as his own, he joined the Confederate army and fought in numerous battles. In 1863, he took part in Pickett's ill-fated charge at Gettysburg. Wounded and captured in this battle, he was imprisoned at Johnston Island until the end of the war.[23]

After his release from Johnston Island, he returned to the South and read law in Lawrenceburg and Florence. He later moved to Savannah and entered into practice with Archibald G. McDougal, an established and respected attorney in that city. Patterson also lived with McDougal, and he married his employer's daughter, carving out an enviable position in Savannah's legal community.[24]

Early in his career, he served as clerk and master of the Chancery Court under Chancellor George H. Nixon. In 1878, Patterson chose to vie for the state senate. Winning the election handily, it was a significant victory for the Democrats in Hardin County. The race in 1882 was less promising for the young attorney. Early on, indications were that Patterson would have an easy time of it, but his opponent, Republican Warren Smith, proved to more than a match. An able speaker, Smith quickly made in-roads into Patterson's support across the farflung district. Patterson was defeated. Hitt asserts that Smith, who could speak German, ingratiated himself with the large German population in Lawrenceburg, a part of the

senatorial district. The Germans block-voted for Smith and his election was ensured.[25]

Four years later, rather than challenge for the senate seat once more, Patterson took the opportunity presented by Judge Thomas Bateman's retirement from the circuit bench to announce for that post. A number of candidates--John T. Allen, Joe Fussell, and L.P. Padgett--threw their hats into the ring, but on election day only Joe H. Fussell, of Columbia, and Patterson remained as active candidates. As expected, the Savannah resident scored a 5,000 vote victory; he carried Hardin County by a four to one margin.[26]

Patterson held the circuit post for eleven years. Judge John Pitts, in his *Personal and Professional Reminiscences,* called him "one of the cleanest and best men I ever knew, and one of the best circuit judges."[27] In 1897, he retired and devoted himself to travel and the blossoming career of his daughter, Mary Elizabeth Patterson, who would grace not only the stages of Broadway, but the silver screens of Hollywood before her death. Judge Patterson also dedicated time to the Savannah Institute, and served as one of its directors as well as director of the Citizen's Bank, and an officer in the 1st National Bank. He died in 1914.[28]

Another longtime Democrat was James D. Martin. A hotelkeeper, Martin served Hardin County in one capacity or another for almost fifty years. A Hardin County native, Martin married into the Kindel family and assisted the matriarch, Elizabeth Kindel, in running the family hotel which sat overlooking the river just downstream from the Cherry House.[29] Sometime between 1850 and 1853, he

was elected to the county court and then shortly thereafter became its chairman. This was soon after the position of county judge was abolished. The title of "judge" had carried over in popular usage, and so Martin would be known as Judge Martin the remainder of his life. Named county court clerk about 1860, he is credited with saving the county records when a courthouse fire threatened them about 1864. During the postwar years, he opened a sawmill and retained his seat on the court.[30]

In 1880, Martin ran for the state legislature. Garnering enough votes to win, he served not one, but two consecutive terms--the only man of his party to achieve this feat before 1900. Stepping down after his term expired, he would not return to Nashville until 1891, and then as Senator James Martin. He served only two years of this term and retired in 1893. Seven years later, he passed away. He had been a force in the Democratic party and Hardin County for nearly half a century.[31]

Other forces, quieter but just as powerful, moved within the party during those years. Captain J.W. Irwin, D.A. and T.J. Welch, and others of the merchant class. Seldom did these men seek more than county office, but they were deeply involved in party politics during the remainder of the century and beyond.

Among the Republican party were two men from that time period who stand out for totally different reasons. Warren Smith, a native of Kentucky, excited the people with his intellect and oratory. Having served the federal government in a variety of posts in Minnesota and Tennessee as both an entomologist and geologist, he arrived in Hardin County during the late 1870s, after

having served as one of the founders of Hohenwald in Lewis County. He was attracted by Hardin County's thick forests and the possibilities for the lumber business.[32]

In 1880 he served as a presidential elector on the Greenback party ticket of James B. Weaver. Two years later he ran against E.D. Patterson for the state senate. Stepping down in 1886, he prepared for a congressional race in 1888. Challenging a popular incumbent, B.A. Enloe, Smith made an excellent showing, losing by only 600 votes in a district considered heavily Democratic.[33]

He remained involved in Republican politics after his defeat, serving as an elector on Benjamin Harrison's ticket in 1892. A term in the state legislature followed in 1895. Shortly after this Smith moved to Harrison, Arkansas where he died in 1903.[34]

Smith was considered something of a social reformer. Among his published works are *Hard Times, Their Causes and Cures; The Working Man's Destiny, His Past, Present and Future; The Social Evil, How to Remedy It;* and *The Spirit Monitor.*[35]

Another prominent Republican from this era was Riley Patterson of Olive Hill. Patterson was a South Carolina native, but he spent much of his life in Hardin and Wayne counties. At the outbreak of the war, he sided with the Union and enlisted in Company B of the 2nd Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment at Clifton. Although members of this company were repeatedly accused of serious crimes, Patterson's name was never mentioned in connection with such activities. At the war's end, he served with the 8th Mounted Infantry at Savannah.[36]

For over thirty years, Patterson was an influential member of the party in Hardin County. A consistent member of the executive committee, he held the post of county trustee from 1878 to 1882, and maintained a seat on the county court for a number of years. Patterson was elected to the state house in 1896, serving but a single term. He died at Olive Hill in 1905.[37]

Other Republican legislators from the period included Saltillo businessman and educator, James A. Hanna, who was a graduate of Southern Illinois Normal at Carbondale and president of the Saltillo Male and Female Academy.[38] James Columbus Mitchell, representing Hardin County in the 48th General Assembly, served also as county court clerk and chairman of the Republican County Executive Committee. His term in the legislature was cut short by his accidental death at Paducah, Kentucky in 1894.[39]

The Republican party maintained control over the county for the balance of the century. Of thirteen state legislators sent to Nashville during the period 1870 to 1900, only three were Democrats. From James A. Hanna's election in 1885 until 1899, the Republicans dominated the legislative seat. Party allegiance on the county level tended to be less important. County office holders were chosen more by reputation than by political affiliation. People knew them. Votes were cast based on a more personal knowledge of the candidates.

In September 1886, the citizens of Hardin County were treated to the best political traveling show in Tennessee history. Brothers Robert Love Taylor and Alfred Taylor were the Democratic and Republican candidates, respectively, for governor of Tennessee. The

contest was dubbed the "War of the Roses," and the brothers spent much of the election campaigning together from the same platform.[40] On September 29th, the pair arrived in Savannah. According to the Courier:

> Bob and Alf Taylor spoke to about twelve hundred people at the fair ground yesterday. They arrived from Clifton on the Steamer Johnson at ten o'clock and were met at the steamboat landing by a large crowd of eager admirers and conducted them to the East House where they held a reception until noon. They dined with Mr. J.A. Cunningham after the speaking, but spent the night at the East House where, for several hours, they conversed with friends. Both spent the evening in the parlor and it really seemed like a family reunion. They left early this morning for Purdy where they will speak today. Both are good orators and well posted on current topics, and delivered their speeches in a happy mood.[41]

A few days later, near Bethel Springs, Hardin County educator, Thomas H. Paine was riding in a buggy with Bob Taylor. The buggy overturned and tossed Paine and Taylor out. Taylor escaped injury, but Paine received a serious head wound. Obviously, Bob Taylor's Hardin County experiences were mixed at best.[42]

In the business community, the younger generation was making their presence felt as well. A number of young merchants made their debut after the war. Edgar Cherry, son of William H. Cherry, and Toney Street opened the firm of Cherry and Street during the late 1860s.[43] Toney Street would later serve as postmaster in Savannah.[44] Interestingly, William H. Cherry, probably the wealthiest man to live in Hardin County during the

nineteenth century, left the county during the war. Cherry was a shrewd businessman, and he found refuge in first Memphis, where he managed a bank and served as president of the Chamber of Commerce. Later, Cherry moved his family to Nashville, opening the firm of Cherry, Morrow, and Company. He used his considerable influence to gain passage of a convict leasing law, a measure which allowed private businesses to "rent" convicts from the state prison. Naturally, Cherry, Morrow, and Company made first use of this cheap form of labor by putting prisoners to work building wagons, the company's main product.[45]

Edgar Cherry, William's son, was a trusted and respected member of the Hardin County community. When his father moved from the area, he left his business holdings in the Edgar's hands. Local folklore has indicated that Cherry fought for the Confederacy, but no records of his service have surfaced. Cherry had extensive landholdings and was engaged in farming.[46]

Captain James W. Irwin was another of the young merchants who entered the scene after the war. He served in Company G of the 1st Tennessee Cavalry Regiment. The son of James Irwin, one of the foremost citizens of Savannah, James W. Irwin opened a mercantile store during the postwar years. It is likely that he merely continued his father's business, which he had a large hand in managing before the war, but records are unclear.[47]

The Williams family had been leaders on the Hardin County business scene for decades. John J. Williams came to the county at an early day, then quickly established himself as a merchant. Williams was married three times,

twice to daughters of Daniel Waggoner and once to a daughter of James Graham, and he fathered seven sons. Although Williams died during the war, several of his sons maintained the business tradition. John J. Williams, Jr., called "the father of banking in Hardin County" by Hitt, helped organize the Bank of Savannah.[48]

The firm, Lewis Welch and Sons, opened for business about 1873, with Lewis and his twin sons Daniel A. and Thomas J. Welch in charge.[49] This particular concern was shortlived, but it provided Dan and Tom Welch with their first hands-on experience in the Savannah business community, an introduction that their competitors in later years would wish had never happened. After the demise of the family firm, they began clerking for other businesses. During the late 1870s, they bought out Cherry and Street and introduced some innovative practices.[50]

The merchants of Savannah were content to rest the economic base on cash and barter transactions. Dan and Tom Welch threw another card into the game. Realizing that there was an inordinate number of customers who were unable to pay cash and who needed all their farm produce for their families, the Welches began the first credit business in the county. Using this approach, they soon held mortgages on vast amounts of farm land, and in later years they became heavily involved in the banking business.[51]

A new bank came to Savannah in 1887 with a capital stock of some $25,000. In March of that year, ground was broken for the new Bank of Savannah building on Main Street. Among the bank officers were A.G. McDougal, E.D. Patterson, Edgar Cherry, J.J. Williams Jr., and Henry

E. Williams.[52]

The small town of Hamburg, in the southwestern portion of the county, had several businesses. E.P. Churchwell, who would one day own a large store in Savannah, had a mercantile store in Hamburg. W.H. Pratt and M.F. Fraley also had stores there. W.L. Clap had a resort hotel in Red Sulphur Springs. Barney Burks also had a store in this vicinity.[53]

At Saltillo, J.C. Mitchell, Thomas Davy, J.M. Alexander, and others had general stores. Jacobus Jones owned one of two drugstores in the town. J.S. Holland owned the river landing where he supervised the loading and unloading of produce and merchandise. George Bingham was another Saltillo storekeeper.[54]

While cotton remained the basic money crop, the natural resources of the county were just beginning to be exploited. The timberland of the county had only been lightly cut over during the early days. People were too few and equipment too primitive to begin wholesale logging. The postwar years, however, saw the production of more sophisticated machinery and a rise in population. The lumber business became a growing concern, an industry which still plays a prominent role in the economy. Warren Smith entered the lumber business on Native American Creek in the late 1870s.[55] T.J. Moss operated a crosstie company and shipped from the landing at Savannah. Newspaper stories of the time periodically document the number of board feet of lumber being shipped on the steamboats.[56] In the later years of the century, the Horse Creek Lumber Company was founded. This firm provided jobs for a number of men in the Horse

Creek/Rogers' Creek area.

The New Order of the South meant an influx of northern capital and industrialism, and a joining of society in the regions. This would not, on the surface, seem to bode well for the small farmer. It was small farmers who populated Hardin County. Across the country, beginning primarily in the Midwest, came a wave of agrarian organizations, designed to champion the cause of the small farmer. The farmers of Hardin County were slow to organize. Perhaps it was their innate suspicions of outsiders, but, at any rate, the Farmer's Alliance and Industrial Union, which could trace its roots to Texas and 1875, had to wait until almost 1890 to establish a chapter in Hardin County.[57]

Quite early, some citizens formed the Hardin County Agricultural and Mechanical Society. This group established the county fairs, although evidence indicates that the first such event occurred around 1861 in Savannah. A.H. Ross was the organization's first president, and court clerk Henry R. Hinkle was its first secretary. This movement began about 1870.[58]

In the late 1880s and early 1890s farmers formed more politically-oriented groups. The Farmer's Institute became active in July 1891. This group was followed by the Farmer's Alliance and Industrial Union, and three years later, the Farmer's Association was organized in 1894.[59]

The Knights of Pythias organized a lodge in Savannah in 1894. M.F. Fraley, W.E. Morris, W.C. Wood, E.B. Cade, E.P. Churchwell, D.J. Hughes, and Will J. Watson were among the first members. Their installation was presided over by Pythians from the Henderson Lodge and the

Lexington Lodge.[60]

The Farmer's Alliance garnered the most interest and support. Ben Terrell, of Texas, traveled to Hardin County in June 1891 to meet with the local chapter, presided over by Thompson H. Maddox. Maddox was a prominent agrarian in the county; he served as chief executive of most such organizations.[61]

Intellectual needs seem to have been met to a certain extent by the Philomathean Society. Designed as a debating society of Savannah College students, these young gentlemen argued deep and complex issues. Debaters, even then, used the device of phrasing the question to be debated as a resolution. Then, one team took the affirmative side and the other the negative. One particular resolution was "Resolved that immersion is a scriptural mode of baptism." This question was debated in 1873 by students Gordon and Sims for the affirmative and Callens and Hurst for the negative. The theological theme was a recurring one in the debates of the Philomathean Society.[62]

Another socially-oriented group was the Temperance Alliance. They met for the first time in July 1894, although this group appears to have been a revival of an earlier organization. A number of prominent citizens signed a notice published in the *Courier*. Among them were J.W. Smith, H.E. Williams, Edgar Cherry, C.L. Hefner, J.G. Dickson, A.M. Gillespie, J.K. Barlow, and Isaac Walker Ross.[63]

Unfortunately, these groups left few details of their operations. Little can be discerned as to their activities, beyond announcements of various meetings, speeches,

and social events. These organizations provided both social and political release for the people of the county. Like the Grange--another agrarian-based group--they provided an opportunity for the people of the county to meet on common ground and discuss their mutual problems, and to socialize--an activity for which the war had left too little time.

A streak of patriotism, not touched since the War Between the States, emerged as America drew nearer its entry into a war with Spain. Hardin County was aglow with the volunteer spirit. E.E. Hagy wrote an open letter to President William McKinley in February 1898 offering his services in the approaching conflict. Writing tongue-in-cheek, Hagy boasted of his fighting prowess and determination to rid the world of the Spaniards.

> Dear Sir. I hereby entreat you that you permit me to enlist as a warrior against Spain. My service you will miss if you fail to accept my offer. I can lick anything that goes to Jones' Mill on Saturday and if you will promise me a job on board the United States battleship Texas, notify me at once, and I will procure the span of mules Gouldbern Chambers sold Will Marler and come by way of Sand Hill at once. Your true friend, E.E. Hagy.[64]

From the many community correspondents for the *Courier* came reports of how war fever was sweeping the county. At Swift, "War is about all you can hear."[65] The merchants of Savannah played on the feelings of the time as well. Advertisements of the period are rife with allusions and references to the war.[66]

As soon as war was declared, a spate of young men

departed to volunteer. Rather than wait for a recruiting drive to be mounted in Hardin County, Hurst McDaniel, George Chambers, and John Paulk hurried to other states to enlist. In June 1898 John R. Cunningham was commissioned as a lieutenant with orders to organize a company at Savannah. To be attached to the Fourth Tennessee Regiment, the company was commanded by J.H. Slayden. The regiment was sent to Cuba, but did not see a great deal of action.[67] The 1st Regiment Alabama State Volunteers invaded Savannah with the idea of signing up some recruits. Lieutenant Will Pride, of the Shiloh Community, was a member of this regiment and spearheaded the drive.[68]

The horrors of the Civil War had receded and the current conflict was treated lightly by all concerned. Spain was seen as no match for American might. A particularly light-hearted incident during the Spanish-American War was the organization of Captain C.F. Sevier's Lightfoot Infantry (average weight 200 pounds). Proclaiming "These men know no fear," the *Courier's* editor announced the formation of this unit in June 1898. Led by Sevier, the company counted Amos Hardin, Dan and Tom Welch, Bob Guinn, G.W. Harbert, John Williams, Edgar Cherry, H.E. Williams, and Val Weller among its number.[69]

The people of the county had a new system for obtaining information from the front. A telephone line connected Savannah with the outside world, and the Associated Press sent war dispatches into town three times a day. They were posted in front of J.K. Barlow's drugstore for everyone to read.[70]

The closing of the war brought a diminishing number of volunteers, the initial fervor dying down quickly. A look at that period leaves the distinct impression, however, that the Spanish-American War provided an opportunity for the people of the county, especially Civil War veterans, to lay aside memories of the battles they fought against one another and face a common foe together. It was a good war, if there is such a thing, and Hardin countians never took it very seriously. As the end of the war drew close, the editor of the *Courier* remarked:

> When the war is over some of the fellows who were eager for it but did not fight will probably congratulate themselves after the manner of the cowardly husband who watched his wife while she engaged in a controversy with a bear, and, when it was over, exclaimed: 'Didn't we have a great fight, Nancy!'[71]

1. *Tennessee Transcript*, 11 September 1879.
2. Ibid.
3. Teuton, Frank L., *Steamboat Days on the Tennessee River* (Washington, D.C.: South Capitol Press, nd.), 2.
4. *Tennessee Transcript*, 11 September 1879; Teuton, 3-5.
5. *Tennessee River News*, 22 July 1873.
6. *Tennessee Transcript*, 11 September 1879.
7. Teuton, 7-10.
8. Ibid., 10-11.
9. *Courier*, 24 September 1885.
10. *Courier*, 7 January 1886.
11. *Courier*, 15 October 1885.
12. *Courier*, 8 April 1886.
13. *Courier*, 15 October 1885.
14. *Courier*, 23 June 1892.
15. Teuton, 60.
16. *Courier*, 8 February 1894.
17. Ibid., 69.
18. Frank B. Williams, III to Tony Hays, 16 September 1985. Original in possession of author.
19. Corlew, 344.
20. McBride, 2:728-29.
21. Goodspeed, 905.
22. McBride, 2:413.
23. Hitt, 59-60.
24. Hitt, 60.
25. McBride, 2:842-43; Hitt, 109.
26. *Courier*, 21 January 1886; 29 July 1886.
27. Pitts, 164.
28. Hitt, 60-61.
29. McBride, 2:604-605.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid. Hitt, 107.
32. McBride, 2:842-43.
33. Ibid.
34. Hitt, 110.
35. McBride, 2:843.
36. McBride, 2:708.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 2:379.
39. Ibid., 2:626.
40. Corlew, 377.
41. *Courier*, 30 September 1886.
42. *Courier*, 7 October 1886.
43. Hitt, 80-81.
44. Goodspeed, 907.

45. Hitt, 78-79; *Courier*, 17 September 1885.
46. Hitt, 82-83.
47. Hitt, 30; *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, 1:220.
48. *Courier*, 24 March 1887; Hitt, 84.
49. *Tennessee River News*, 22 July 1873.
50. Hitt, 86-7; Goodspeed, 840.
51. Hitt, 86-87.
52. *Courier*, 24 March 1887.
53. Goodspeed, 841.
54. Ibid.
55. McBride, 2:843.
56. *Courier*, 31 March 1887.
57. *Courier*, June 1891.
58. Goodspeed, 837.
59. *Courier*, 10 May 1894.
60. *Courier*, 3 May 1894.
61. *Courier*, June 1891.
62. *Courier*, 22 July 1873.
63. *Courier*, 21 June 1894.
64. *Courier*, 11 March 1898.
65. *Courier*, 8 April 1898.
66. Ibid.
67. Corlew, 410.
68. *Courier*, 24 June 1898.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. *Courier*, 29 July 1898.

Chapter Nine

The African-American Community

While whites were readjusting to the trauma of post Civil War life in Hardin County, another segment of the population was coming to terms with both trauma and a more frightening, and more exciting, condition--freedom. The African-Americans of Hardin County suddenly found themselves with a limited independence unlike any they had known before. By 1885, their community had developed leadership in three areas of life--business, religion, and education.

During the post Civil War years, two distinct African-American communities formed in Savannah. One, Newtown, was peopled by the servants from the big homes in Savannah. Stringtown, which may be the result of the improper pronunciation of Springtown, was settled by field hands from the river bottoms and the plantations.[k]

[k] This is a theory expounded by Henry Williams, of Savannah.

Little is known about the leaders in these communities during the post Civil War period. Betsy Hooks, widow of businessman Harry Hooks, played a leadership role in the community. About 1880, Alexander Haley came to town, quickly becoming a prominent man in Newtown.

The *Courier* provided extensive coverage of activities in the African-American communities. It is through these reports that the development of the African-American communities in Savannah and Hardin County can be most readily tracked.

While freed African-Americans were not a novelty in Savannah before the war, they also were not a major concern. The specter of a slave rebellion was a far more menacing vision than any potential damage that could be done by freed African-Americans. John McCullough Ross's letter to his relatives in Arkansas of his fears of a slave revolt emphasize how seriously people took those concerns.[1] Harry Hooks, a shoemaker, and Pompey Daniel, a preacher, were both highly respected freed African-Americans in Hardin County. Suddenly, with the end of the war, the number of freed African-Americans was multiplied tenfold, and a new set of fears crept into the psyche of Hardin Countians, fears that the former slaves would take over the government and mete out retribution for their earlier treatment.

The African-Americans themselves, however, were busy trying to come to terms with their new freedom. Shut out from participation in government, they formed their own institutions. By 1885, an educational institute for African-American teachers had been established. In September of that year it met for a three day period to

prepare teachers.[2]

Lee Smith was already a prominent man by 1885 when the death of his wife was reported in the *Courier*.[3] A number of meetings were held at Aunt Betsy Hooks' house, which probably sat near what is now Ross and Barlow Law Offices. Alec Haley, within a short time of his arrival, became the ferryman at the Savannah landing.

Haley arrived in Savannah sometime prior to 1885. The first mention of him was in October 1885: "On the 20th of August 1885, by Alec Haley, one bay Horse 15 1/2 hands high, about 8 years old, split in right hoof, blind in right eye."[4]

On Christmas Eve, 1888, Haley's reputation took a leap upwards. Mr. and Mrs. James H. Happy upon returning from their honeymoon, attempted to cross the river on Haley's ferry. The river bank was muddy, and so the wagon driver brought the wagon as close to the ferryboat as possible. Unfortunately, the bank was also soft and the wagon, horses, driver, and newlyweds were all tossed into the river. According to the report in the *Courier*, "The team and driver faced about and swam out; Alec Haley, the ferryman, rescued Mr. and Mrs. Happy."[5] Other articles allude to his house being used for meetings, particularly after the death of Aunt Betsy Hooks in 1886.

These people and others formed counterparts to white organizations very early. The Hardin County Colored Agricultural and Mechanical Association was organized as early as 1875. Ten years later, it was still a going concern. W.M. Ayers of Nixon served as the organization's secretary.[6] The *Courier* gave a great deal of coverage to the fair and generally had complimentary

statements about the efforts of the African-American communities such as the following: "The fair conducted by the colored people last week, besides proving self-sustaining financially, was a source of much pleasant intercourse between our colored citizens and their neighbors."[7]

In 1886, the paper reported on the following activity:

> The barbecue and picnic given by the colored people, near the college last Saturday, was well-attended. The music, by both the string and brass band, was excellent and enjoyed by everybody. The dancers had a good time notwithstanding the extreme heat. The game of baseball was spirited but was broken up at the end of the third inning by a light shower of rain. The rain also interfered with the success of the dinner.[8]

Prejudice was, however, still alive and well. The following item comes from the October 15, 1885 *Courier*:

> Saltillo Items: The arrest of a negro for stealing a purse last Saturday created considerable excitement. He was arrested by a lady but the officer who took charge of him let him escape. Some parties who saw him getting away and so many after him thought the negro was surely wild with hydrophobia, that is so common in our town now.[9]

The Reverend Lewis Powell and Professor F.B. Jones became leaders in both education and religion. Little is known about either man, but they both assumed major roles in leading the African-American community.

In 1887, Jones is mentioned in connection with a charity affair.

> The colored people will give a concert at the A.M.E. Church in New Town, Friday night Feb. 11, 1887 to raise money to be used in repairing the church. The concert will be under the management of Prof. F.B. Jones, who is teaching school in the church, and promises to be an entertainment of rare merit. As this is a laudable enterprise everybody should lend a small contribution. Admission 10 and 20 cents.[10]

Many of the leaders and old people of the community were dying. One of the first leaders to die was Aunt Betsy Hooks. Her husband, Harry, had died in the 1860s.[11] William Bradley, an assistant postmaster at Sibley and a deacon of the New Zeal Church at the same place, died in 1888. Bradley served as clerk of the first African-American board of school directors ever appointed in Hardin County and was involved with the Sibley Academy.[12]

The next year, 1889, another link with Hardin County's prewar past fell away. Peter Whitlow, the drayman who worked with the Portuguese man Druze Pran, died in Savannah.[13]

The county voted on prohibition in September 1887, a referendum which failed, and the African-American vote was heavily courted by the prohibitionists. "J.C. Mitchell addressed the colored people of Hooker's Bend last Sunday on Prohibition. Short speeches were also made by J.A. Hanna, W.F. Hinkle, and W.H. Blankenship."[14] An earlier comment in the *Courier* was more to the point: "Newtown--We are proud to say that some of our best colored citizens are strong prohibitionists and will prove it

next September."[15] These reports imply that many of the Jim Crow laws, designed to keep African-Americans away from the polls, were not fully in place in Hardin County. While the state turned down the referendum by some 20,000 votes, Hardin countians rejected prohibition with a slim 176 vote majority.[16]

Education in the African-American community was also making great strides. In April of 1888, a meeting was held at the C.M.E. church in Newtown. Representatives from both Newtown and Stringtown were in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the construction of a new consolidated school building. From news reports of the time, it seems that at an earlier meeting Stringtown and Newtown had agreed to combine forces on the educational front. A series of speeches in favor of the project were made by African-American leaders such as Reverend I.C. Cherry, F.G. Bell, W.B. Davis, W.P. Cherry, and Marion Cole. As the *Courier* reported at the conclusion of the meeting: "This and the Stringtown District, having agreed to consolidate, there seems to be only one thing needed and that is to push the measure onward."[17]

The task was a large one indeed. Money was tight for the African-American communities, and the expense of constructing a new school building constituted no small sum. F.B. Jones, a schoolteacher in the area, took a major role in raising the funds. Jones is something of an unknown quantity in Hardin County history. His birthplace and educational background are not known, but he was a constant force in African-American education in the latter part of the 19th century. Numerous references to him

appeared in the *Savannah Courier* during the last twenty years of that century. As an instructor, he seems to have been the premier force behind education in the African-American communities.

Just a week after the meeting with the Stringtown leaders, the following item appeared in the *Courier*:

> Prof. F.B. Jones is making an effort to get the colored people of Savannah interested in the erection of a school building in New Town in keeping with the wants of that community. He should be aided and encouraged in this work, not only by the colored, but by the white people all over the county.[18]

It seems apparent from this article that Jones was spearheading the construction effort.

Evidence indicates, however, that a rift developed between the two African-American communities. Later reports in the *Courier* seem to imply that the new school building had become primarily a Newtown project. For a short period of time from mid 1889 to early 1890, the *Courier* dropped its coverage of activities in the African-American communities. However, the new school building became a reality for at least a portion of the county's African-American school children in late 1890. By that date, the *Courier* had returned to covering news from the African-American areas. On October 16, 1890 the following story appeared:

> The new school house recently built by the colored people of Savannah is a neat two story structure and stands as a monument to show that mark of enterprise that should be shown by colored people everywhere.[19]

The implication is that the school building was constructed in or near Savannah--Newtown. Stringtown is not mentioned in reports after the first story dealing with the new school. Perhaps the consolidation effort fell through. Perhaps the Stringtown community was unable to raise a sufficient amount of money to remain a part of the project. Resentment could have developed among the residents of Newtown. Public pressure could have forced Stringtown onto the sidelines.

Yet while the African-American communities were struggling to organize, to provide the best possible education for their youth, one of the darkest episodes in post-Civil War Hardin County history occurred. In August 1890, Abb Stephenson, a young African-American man, was confronted by Constable Jack Fraley. During the ensuing fracas, Fraley was shot and killed. Stephenson was immediately arrested and jailed at Savannah.[20]

During the night after Stephenson's arrest, a crowd, angered at the popular Fraley's death, gathered and demanded that Sheriff Counce turn the suspect over to them. Counce argued, but his pistol was taken from him, and Stephenson was removed from the jail and hanged.[21] This episode represents the only documented lynching in the county.

1. John McCullough Ross to Charles Walker Ross, 4 January 1857.
2. *Courier* 17 September 1885.
3. *Courier* 24 September 1885.
4. *Courier* 1 October 1885.
5. *Courier* 5 January 1888.
6. *Courier* 1 October 1885.
7. *Courier* 7 October 1886.
8. *Courier* 5 August 1886.
9. *Courier* 15 October 1885.
10. *Courier* 3 February 1887.
11. *The 1980 Cemetery Census of Hardin County, Tennessee* (Savannah, Tennessee: Hardin County Historical Society, 1984), 420.
12. *Courier* 5 December 1888.
13. *Courier* 14 March 1889.
14. *Courier* 2 July 1887.
15. *Courier* 12 May 1887.
16. Corlew, 378; *Courier* 6 October 1887.
17. *Courier* 16 April 1888.
18. *Courier* 3 May 1888.
19. *Courier* 16 October 1890.
20. *Courier* 7 August 1890.
21. *Courier* 13 November 1890.

Chapter Ten

Life and Society 1870 - 1900

The late 1800s and early 1900s were a peaceful, idyllic time in counties such as Hardin. Mention of the so-called Gilded Age reminds one of train travel, traveling salesmen, Sunday afternoon band concerts, and little boys in knickers. Although the Hardin County of that era had all those things (save train travel), it also held moonshiners, dawn-to-dusk farmers, barn-raisings, serenading, church socials, and a dozen other elements common to rural counties.

The county fair, sponsored by the Agricultural and Mechanical Society, was one of the social highlights of the season. The people competed in equestrianship, livestock, baking and canning. A floral hall was constructed and exhibits were both numerous and detailed. The band would play songs on the soft, fall evenings, songs like "Annie Rooney" and "Sweet Bye and Bye."[1]

In the early phases of colonizing a new region, social

activities tend to center around community gatherings, dances, barn-raisings, and, most importantly, church activities. But after the initial period of settlement in any frontier area, social activities begin to take form and substance. Differences emerge in the population. Politics intrude. Varying philosophies evolve. Social activities begin to alter, take on new forms. Men feel the need to socialize in organized ways, not just getting together to down a few drinks at the local tavern. Women experience the desire to pursue their own interests in more structured settings.

From these variables, Americans, during the 18th and 19th centuries particularly, formalized many of their social activities into clubs. Often these clubs were constructed around political parties; sometimes they were annexes of church organizations. During the 18th century, secret societies flourished in the United States and abroad. The Order of Cincinnatus, The Illuminati of France, and the Masonic Lodge, were all organizations whose activities and goals were quite shrouded during the early years of our country's growth. Indeed, it was organizations such as these that in the 1820s sparked a strong public opposition to secret organizations in general. The Masons were targeted by a political party in the late 1820s and 1830s.

In Hardin County, little is known about the founding of secret societies. Many records from such organizations during the 1800s are no longer in existence. Through the use of carefully-preserved records, something of the early years of the Masonic Lodge in Savannah can be traced, it may be used as a microcosm of the development of social

organizations in Hardin County since, not only does it detail something of the membership and activities of the Savannah Lodge, it also gives us clues to the existence of other lodges--some now defunct--out in the county.

According to James W. Irwin, who summarized the records in 1905, the earliest extant minutes begin in 1859, but there are numerous references to petitions and other documents dating from 1842.[2] One of the earliest references occurs in October, 1842, when the county court voted to allow the lodge to meet at the courthouse.[3] Membership in the Masonic Lodge of Savannah was quite large judging from the early records. Irwin's summary of the records indicate early memberships, deaths of members, the transfer of members, and, occasionally, the expulsion of members for conduct unbecoming Masons.

Among early Savannah Masons were Daniel Bohannon, W.D. Booth, Brazelton Butler, Alfred Boy, Lewis Franks, Lawson Hays, Battis Hinkle, T.P. Harbert, John McDougal, Dr. George E. Morrow, Moses E. Glenn, Reverend David H. Merryman, Thomas Maxwell, Morgan Ross, I.W. Ross, W.U. Ross, Dr. J.H. Logan, Robert McMahan, and Daniel Johnson were just a few of the pre-Civil War members of the Savannah Lodge.[4]

The summary prepared by J.W. Irwin begins with the decision on June 6, 1859 to construct a lodge hall in cooperation with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The church would occupy the first floor; the lodge would conduct its meetings in the upper story. In August of that year, it was decided to build the structure near the large mound east of William Cherry's house. The cornerstone was to be laid on October 8, 1859, but no record of the

ceremony exists.

As the Civil War drew closer, there must have been a great deal of dissension among the brothers of the Savannah Lodge. The Reverend David Merryman and William Cherry, both members, were the most outspoken leaders of each side in the secession controversy.

Despite the growing debate, lodge business continued. On December 29, 1860, officers for the Savannah and Waynesboro lodges were installed in a ceremony that included a parade from the lodge to the Methodist Church and back. Reverends W.H. Browning and Chesley G. Hudson delivered the appropriate addresses and the officers were installed.[5]

Little mention is made of the coming conflict in lodge records and one of the few references to the war itself occurred on September 1, 1862, some five months after the battle of Shiloh. A committee, which had been appointed to determine the amount and extent of damage done to the lodge building by Federal soldiers reported that such reparations should amount to $107. A second committee was appointed to institute proceedings to recover the damages. The war forced the cancellation of lodge meetings in November and December 1862, and then again from February 3rd to July 8th 1863. Meetings during the war were held at Ross church.[6]

As happened frequently when Federal troops occupied Southern dwellings and buildings, the wartime practice of to-the-victor-go -the-spoils was visited on the Savannah Lodge. Its ceremonial items were discovered to be missing after the departure of the Federals. To rectify this, the lodge voted to purchase new ceremonial devices

in April, 1866. Interestingly, in March, 1867, a lodge in Hamburg, Illinois wrote the Savannah Lodge and indicated that they were in possession of the lost ceremonial items. The devices were returned in August of 1867.[7]

A gathering in June of 1871 indicated the proliferation of lodges within the county. At this Masonic parade, representatives from lodges at Saltillo, Lowryville, Hamburg, Gravel Hill, and Olive Hill were in attendance. The Savannah Lodge also made significant contributions to lodges ranging from Hartsville, Tennessee to Florence, South Carolina to Rienzi, Mississippi to Nebraska City.[8]

The calming of tensions after the Civil War brought a cascade of social change and new causes and organizations began to vie with the Masonic Lodge and other such fraternal organizations for members. No meetings were held for months at a time between December 1885 to December 1889. It must be noted that it was this period in Savannah and Hardin County when the temperance cause moved to the forefront and other social causes captured the public's attention, including labor unions and an incessantly-changing political situation.

By 1889, however, under the leadership of such men as E.D. Patterson and J.W. Irwin, masonry began to reemerge in Hardin County. Other county lodges fell by the wayside, but the Savannah lodge remained and remains as a viable fraternal organization, one with a history extending over one hundred and fifty years.

Leisure activities were many. Without the electronic entertainment of the present, Hardin countians found ample ways to relax and recreate. A favorite activity

during the mid 1880s was the "nutting" party. Groups of young people would go into the woods, with their chaperones, to picnic and collect nuts. The newspapers record complete lists of the participants in these expeditions. Names such as M.V. Staley, Cora Kindel, Annie DeFord, and J.F. McDougal frequently appear.[9]

Drama arrived in the county as well. Often, play productions were held to benefit some civic cause. "Under the Laurels" was staged in October, 1891 to raise money for the public library.[10] Stella and Ella Broyles, Belle Patterson, Robert Hinkle, Arch Williams, and Arch Walker were some of the local actors.

The Epworth League was a constant source of social activities. Parties and socials were held everywhere from private residences to the Hotel Savannah. Another group, the Busy Bees, was the particular champion of the library movement and held a number of successful fundraising activities.

Some forms of popular recreation appear a little mysterious in the present. During the 1890s, the game of "cinching" was in vogue. According to Webster's, cinching is "a game of cards." The editor of the *Savannah Courier* lauded its merit as a form of entertainment without ever giving a clue as to its rules. "We don't suppose any form of amusement ever had such a hold on the society of a town that cinch playing has on Savannah. It supercedes[sic] everything and all enjoy it."[11]

The Savannah Band was organized in the 1890s to provide music for many of these social activities. Will J. Watson, druggist J.K. Barlow, H.E. Williams, and others formed the brass band which practiced in the courthouse

four nights a week. Thanks to Will Watson, who also served as county court clerk, some of the records of the band have survived, including notations of payments for coal to heat the courthouse for practice sessions. The original members of the band were J.K.Barlow, Will J. Watson, J.R. Carrington, A.L. Story, J.A. Counce, Will Armstrong, Charlie Baker, R.L. Hamilton, Charlie Doran, Fred McDougal, George Street, and H.Y. East.[12]

The group was subjected to tight controls. The fine for missing a meeting was 25 cents. Within a month, they had doubled that amount to 50 cents. While a number of groups invited the band to perform at such events as picnics and church socials, they were selective about when and for what occasion they played. "It is ordered that it requires two thirds vote of the Band to go on any kind of serenade, excursion, or other trip outside the band room to play." The group was all business. On January 16, 1889, they voted that "any member who utters an oath or otherwise talks to the disturbance of the Band while in the practice room for the purpose of practice . . . shall be fined 10 cts for each offense.[13]

Their efforts paid off, as evidenced by the following article from the *Courier*:

> Our Band--The Savannah Cornet Band made its debut last Friday at the picnic. The music was excellent. Following are the names of the members: 1st E(flat) L.F. DeFord; 2nd E(flat), A.L. Story; 1st B(flat), W.J. Watson; 2nd B(flat), Henry East; 1st Alto, Fred McDougal; 2nd Alto, Charlie Williams; 1st Tenor, R.L. Hamilton; Baritone, Charlie Doran; Tuba, J.R. Carrington; Snare Drum, George Street; Bass Drum, J.A. Counce.[14]

In the rural areas, different sorts of entertainment were found. Log-rollings were popular community events and drew large crowds. Longtime county residents can remember gathering as youngsters and going about the area serenading. Cornshuckings, taffy pulls, and church meetings gave the people an opportunity to congregate and relieve the burdens of farming.[15]

Not to be forgotten were the carnivals and "blockbuster" shows which traveled throughout the country. Eugene Robinson's "3 FLOATING PALACES" visited Hardin County in the early 1890s. Three years later, it was John J. Sparks' Colossal Shows which delighted the people of Savannah.

Diaries, such as that of Endora Kindel Dalbey, detail a well-entrenched social structure in Savannah and the other towns of the county. The well-to-do merchants and professional men were busily building fine, Victorian homes during the latter years of the century. Their wives, sons and daughters participated in a flurry of social activities. Out in the county, the state of affairs was little different, except that the need to work eliminated much of the leisure time enjoyed by townspeople.[16]

The Savannah Male Academy reopened its doors in 1867, with the Reverend W.G. Davis as the new president. In 1885, the school, now known as Hardin College although it was simply a secondary school, was reorganized under President H.J. Cox. H.P. Wood joined Cox in 1886, and they offered instruction in mathematics, language, science, music, and art.[17] The destruction of the building by fire in 1890s served as the catalyst for another

reorganization. At that time, the school was renamed the Savannah Institute and funds were raised for a new building.[18]

Another fire, possibly an act of arson, destroyed the academy at Saltillo in 1886:

> Saltillo--The college building was burned to the ground, in a very few minutes, last Saturday night. Some ladies were passing the building on their way to Dr. Logan's when they discovered a light on the back side of the house. The alarm was raised by ringing the bell and screams, but as it was between eleven and twelve o'clock every one seemed to be sound asleep; however all was done that could be, but nothing was saved. The crowd turned their attention to saving Churchwell's store house--no damage was done to it except a slight scorching. The residences of Logan, Shannon, Kincannon, and Mitchel were carefully watched, and several others had to keep the fire brushed from the roofs of their houses. There had been no fire in the stoves for a day or two, so, without a doubt it was set on fire. Our town was peaceable and quiet, none interested in the school know of an enemy. The building was expensive. The community is thoroughly aroused and will seek justice first, then a new college. The school will continue in other buildings.[19]

No one was ever brought to trial for burning the school.

Despite these setbacks, great strides were being made in the public school system. The advent of the steam sawmills brought a new facet to education. Subscription schools, operated in conjunction with the sawmills, provided education for the workers' children. As one area

was logged-out, the sawmills would move to another tract. The workers and their families moved with them, as did the subscription schools, ensuring continuing education for a very transient community.[20]

At the subscription schools, the task was less than burdensome. Those who paid for the teacher's salary got together and decided upon an instructor. Often, their choice was the wife of one of the laborers at the sawmill. Samintha Welch, wife of John C. Welch who worked at "Number Three," was one such teacher.[21] Though less stable than the public schools, these gypsy schools provided a needed alternative to conventional public education.

By 1883, records indicate that there were over one hundred teachers in the county--one-fifth of whom were African-American. Average daily attendance counted for about one-half of the school-age children, African-American and white. Almost 7,000 children were eligible to attend school.[22]

In addition to the Savannah Institute, three other private schools were in operation in the county by 1900. Bell Academy operated to the south of Savannah. Ross Academy stood near the Graham's Chapel community. Finally, Saltillo Academy, established as early as 1879, stood in that town.[23]

The election of Miss Bessie Moore as superintendent of schools in 1888 brought a new facet both to Hardin County politics and education. After some years spent teaching in rural schools, Moore took over the superintendent's reins. According to Drew Hitt, the school system suffered from monetary problems. Miss Moore,

the first woman known to have achieved elective office in the county, approached her office with "energy, efficiency and enthusiasm," rectifying those money problems.[24]

At the close of her term, Moore went to Brazil as a missionary. Two years later, she returned to Savannah and married Will J. Watson, a local lawyer and county politician. They moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee after the turn of the century.[25]

A movement began shortly after the cessation of hostilities in the Civil War among the veterans of the Battle of Shiloh to have the hallowed ground on which many of their compatriots died declared a national monument. Reunions of veterans from both sides began to make pilgrimages to Pittsburgh Landing to look over the well-remembered acres.

Union veterans established a post at Savannah well before the mid-1880s. United Daughters of the Confederacy and United Confederate Veterans also organized posts in Savannah. These groups worked together to get the federal government to establish a military park at Shiloh.

Two of the primary movers behind the national battlefield movement were Union veteran Major D.W. Reed, who served as secretary and historian of the park commission, and Captain James W. Irwin, formerly of the Confederate army. Reed worked on the national level, lobbying in the Washington political scene while Irwin served as land agent for the commission, buying up large tracts of land on which the battle was fought.[26]

During the late 1880s, advertisements in the *Savannah Courier*, placed by Irwin, offered to buy the land at "fair

prices."[27] Once the land was purchased, it became necessary to locate the positions of the units. Former Governor Isham G. Harris, who served as an aide to General Albert Sidney Johnston at the battle, was recruited to assist in this task. Other veterans roamed over the now-overgrown acreage and identified the sites of their units and skirmishes.[28]

The federal government, shortly after the war, gathered all the Union dead and had them interred at Pittsburgh Landing on a bluff overlooking the river. The site abutted the location of the cabin Grant used as his field headquarters during the battle. Reunions and Decoration Days kept the battlefield alive with visitors. The area was a popular picnic spot throughout the latter half of the century.

In 1886, Goodspeed, in their history of the county, stated that the county has had a newspaper off and on since about 1843. Unfortunately, no copies of any of those early papers still exist and nothing is known about their content or their publishers.[29]

Postwar journalism appears to have begun with the Tennessee River News which began publication about 1873. This sheet, a non-political one, changed hands a few times during that decade and was followed about 1878 by the Tennessee Transcript. Colonel Victor Thompson and his wife ran this enterprise for about five years. After Thompson's death in 1884, his wife sold the paper to Charles L. Hefner, an itinerant journalist who had come to the county with photographer M.V. Staley.[30]

With the purchase of the sheet by Hefner, the paper's name was changed to the *Savannah Courier*. Proclaiming

a nonpartisan editorial policy, the paper's advertising slots were soon filled and the business was off and running. This paper would prove to be the longest lasting enterprise in the history of the county. Although it changed hands several times, it has remained a nonpolitical newspaper.

Other papers were begun during the 1870s and 1880s. The *Savannah Times* and the *Republican Record* were two political sheets in the county. Both failed after fairly short careers. The county has never supported political papers.

1. Goodspeed, 837.
2. Masonic Records, np.
3. Minute Book C, 494.
4. Masonic Records, np.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. *Courier,* December 1885.
10. *Courier,* October 1891.
11. *Courier,* 10 September 1891.
12. Hardin County, Tennessee, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Microfilm, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
13. Ibid.
14. *Courier,* 23 May 1889.
15. Mamie Crotts, interview with author, 16 June 1984, Author's notes.
16. Hardin County, Tennessee, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Microfilm, Tennessee State Library and Archives.
17. *Courier,* 26 June 1886; Hitt, 44.
18. *Courier*
19. *Courier,* 19 April 1886.
20. Elva Stricklin, interview by author, 16 June 1984.
21. Mamie Crotts, interview by author, 16 June 1984.
22. Brazelton, 107.
23. Goodspeed, 839.
24. Hitt, 45.
25. Ibid.
26. Hitt, 30.
27. *Courier*
28. *Courier*
39. Goodspeed, 840.
30. *Courier,* 17 September 1885.

Chapter Eleven

The New Century

Dawn on January 1, 1900 saw much the same county as it had fifty years before. While the settled areas--Saltillo, Hamburg, and Savannah--grew and new merchants entered, the rural areas remained much as they had been at the close of the Civil War. Mules and plows tilled the land. Trips were made to town but once a year. Children had to rely on a single pair of shoes to last them for twelve months.

Between trips to town, families ordered from one of a number of traveling saleswomen. As opposed to their town-bound counterparts, salesmen, these women were generally from the immediate neighborhood and rode horseback from house to house across hills and hollows selling mail order goods. Cloth for suits, tinware and other items were offered by these door-to-door saleswomen. Roy Welch, who lived in Pickens Hollow during the early years of this century, remembered visits from these rural entrepreneurs.[1]

Savannah had two prosperous banks--the Bank of Savannah (later First National Bank) and Citizens Bank. E.D. Patterson served as president of the Bank of Savannah. Edgar Cherry was president of Citizens Bank. The banks faced the difficult task of convincing those who lived in the outlying areas to trust their money with others, and bank advertising was almost as plentiful as it is today.[2]

The more glamorous side of this era were the running battles between law enforcement officials and the local moonshiners. As early as 1886, the sheriff was busy rounding up men who sold untaxed liquor. In November of that year, eight Hardin countians were tried in federal court at Jackson--George Castile, John Shipman, George Shipman, Jim Brown, Sam Johnson, Jim Barnes, Joe Barnes, Bill Howard, and Bob Wood. All were found guilty.[3]

Gus Thomas, his brother Dick, and nephew Ed were three of the most renowned makers of untaxed liquor. During the late 1890s, this trio haunted the hills of southwestern Hardin County making moonshine and frustrating the law.

In 1895, John Kennedy provided authorities with the location of a Thomas still. In the subsequent raid, Ed Thomas was killed. According to local folklore, Gus Thomas swore to kill Kennedy, and, the day after Ed died, Kennedy was murdered.[4] Hardin County sheriff Lon Story presented sufficient evidence to the March, 1896 circuit court that Thomas and his brother, Dick, were charged with Kennedy's murder and another at Red Sulphur Springs. Tried first for the murder of A.L. Martin

at Red Sulpher Springs, Thomas was convicted and sentenced to 15 years.[5]

Thomas was finally brought to trial for the murder of John Kennedy in September, 1897. Thomas, classified as a "dandy," cut quite a figure at the trial, the most famous in county history to that time. Defended by Henry Hardin, Thomas was convicted and received the death sentence; Dick was sentenced to life at hard labor. On appeal, however, the Supreme Court reversed the lower court decision on Gus and converted the sentence to life.[6]

Gus and Dick made several attempts to escape, all unsuccessful. Dick eventually died in prison. In June, 1904, Gus wrote to attorney E.W. Ross, Sr., seeking his assistance in obtaining a parole. Remarking that a petition was circulating requesting his release, Thomas assured Ross that,

> I have no desire to return to my old home. I bear no one an ill thought. And if only given an opportunity, will take my little family and go where I am unknown and by the help of God live a new life, devote my time to best possible good and in time live down the past and by so doing prove myself worthy of the respect of the respectable. My resolutions are firm and strong and shall ever remain thus.[7]

According to Morgan Ross, Gus was paroled and went to California where he entered the ministry.[8]

The arrival of the Horse Creek Lumber Company brought a new prosperity of sorts to the rural sections of the county. The huge tracts of uncut lumber offered the prospect of equally large profits. Bringing its steam-driven sawmills, the company set up a number of camps along

Horse Creek. Those men who worked them remember these sites as Number 1, Number 2, and so on. Similar operations were conducted on Native American Creek.[9]

Families followed these camps as the crews cut over the timber and moved on to new locations. Not only did these lumber companies provide regular employment for a large number, but they offered "freelance" jobs. Farmers with time on their hands, or empty pockets, had only to take their wagons to one of the sawmills, pick up a load of lumber, and deliver it to Duncan's Landing. The only requirements for this piece-work were a wagon and team. Those citizens who can remember this period hold fond memories of the company and its satellite camps.[10]

The political situation in the county remained relatively stable during the first twenty years of the new century. While a Democrat was the last man to be elected to the state legislature in the 19th century, Risden Davis DeFord, a Union veteran of the 6th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, regained the seat for his party in 1901. DeFord and his family came to Savannah after the Civil War, but he soon bought the mill at Olive Hill.[11]

DeFord's successor was George Thomas Shannon. A farmer from Saltillo and former chairman of the county court, Shannon outpolled Democratic challenger Andy McCasland by over 300 votes in 1903. Shannon, however, served only one term in the general assembly.[12]

Bipartisan outrage over the Dortch Law, a measure which included a literacy test as well as shuffling the districts of the county and, in effect, disenfranchising many voters, was sounded in 1902. Twenty-six Democrats and sixteen Republicans signed a notice calling on voters

to meet in mass convention in Savannah to propose a candidate for the state senate with the express purpose of defeating the Dortch Law.[13]

This action resulted in the election that year of an independent candidate. Jesse Cannon Jackson, of Hardeman County, captured the state senate seat with a 1,200 vote majority over Democrat W.R. Tuton. Jackson, however, declared himself a Democrat on taking office.[14]

The sole Hardin countian to serve in the state senate during this time period was Walter Gill, a Texas native. Gill moved into Hardin County sometime prior to 1901, when he served as county superintendent of schools. A Democrat, he served in the state senate from 1905 to 1907, after which he moved to Hominy, Oklahoma. Gill eventually became president of Northwestern Normal College in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.[15]

County positions continued to be split between the major parties, although Republicans held a significant edge. One of the best examples of the split in partisan politics in the county can be seen by comparing the affiliations of the lower house representatives and the state senators representing Hardin County. Only one Democrat held the state house seat from 1901 to 1953. However, only one Republican held the state senate seat during the same time period, and this seems to have been the result of Democratic dominance in the other counties in the district that included Hardin County.

The election of Democrat Watkins Hardin to the lower house in 1905 marked a backwash in Republican domination of county politics. The son of William K. Hardin and Sallie McCandless Hardin, "Wat" was a

Confederate veteran and former justice of the peace in Hardin County.[16] His election marked the last time a Democrat would hold the legislative seat until the 1950s.

Hardin was followed in the legislature by Charles P. Hoover, a teacher from Hamburg. Hoover's election may have been tied to the Prohibition issue. The general assembly passed a prohibition act in 1909, mustering enough support to overcome a gubernatorial veto.[17] Hoover also served two terms and was succeeded by fellow Republican Lon Allen Scott of Savannah who would serve three terms.[18]

The longest serving member of Congress from Savannah was Thetus Willrette Sims. Born in Wayne County in 1852, Sims came to Savannah in 1862 with his parents. He attended Savannah College and received his law degree from Cumberland University in Lebanon in 1876. He moved to Perry County shortly thereafter, and in 1896 was elected to Congress representing Hardin County. Sims, a Democrat, served in Congress for 24 years, becoming chairman of the Committee on War Claims and the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.[19]

Sims, in his first term, came out strongly against the gold-standard. Speaking on the 1897 Tariff Bill (H.R. 379), Sims said,

> Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the gold-standard members of the Republican party do not want bimetallism of any kind or character. All they want is to have the greenbacks retired by virtually converting them into interest-bearing Government bonds and the powers of national banks increased. This is all they

> want, and is all they will permit. They forced the word "gold" into your platform, and they intend to force it into the statutes of this county.[20]

Sims opted not to seek re-election and retired from politics, ultimately moving back to Washington, D.C. where he died in 1939.[21]

Sims was replaced by Republican Lon Scott, who served in the state house from 1913 to 1919. A native of Wayne County, Scott attended the Savannah Institute and, later, Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee. As a young man, he taught school, ran a business, and was involved in the later farm union organizations.[22]

These activities led to an interest in politics. After a successful first term in the general assembly, he was chosen House minority leader during his second term. Perhaps the capstone to his career, however, was his appointment to represent the state in the impeachment trial of Z. Newton Estes, attorney general of Shelby County who had been charged with allowing saloons to operate in Memphis in violation of the law. Estes was successfully impeached.[23]

His legislative career was broken by the First World War. Scott resigned from the legislature and enlisted in the Marine Corps; later he was promoted to lieutenant.[24]

Scott's service in the state legislature was followed by a single term in the House of Representatives. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Jackson where he remained until his death in 1931.[25]

During the first decade of the century, the hottest issue concerned the building of a new courthouse. The structure then in use had been built by Anthony Gholston in 1868 to

replace a fire-damaged structure. Improper maintenance and over thirty years of use had created major problems. Meetings were interrupted by leaking ceilings, and the structural integrity was in question. The movement took shape in 1905 and was supported by most of the prominent men in the county. The editor of the Courier called for a new building, and a mass meeting was held March 18, 1905. At that gathering, a committee was appointed to prepare an economic impact report on a new building.[26]

Representatives from Olive Hill objected to immediate action and moved to defer the project for a year. This request was met with some derision by proponents of the new courthouse. The committee's favorable report spurred the county court to overwhelmingly approve the building of a new structure. Finished in 1907, the courthouse reflected some of the turn-of-the-century Victorian influence and sported a large clock tower.

Hardin countians were involved in some of the United States' foreign adventures during this period. Twenty-five year old Bolden Reush Harrison was a seaman on the *U.S.S. Pampang* during the campaign against the outlaws in the Philippines in 1911. On September 24, 1911, Harrison, as part of a shore party, was ordered to capture the village of Mundang on the island of Basilan. The advanced party, entering the village, came under heavy fire from native Moros hidden in their huts. Harrison responded to the cries for help and burst into the center of the village armed with only a shotgun, he killed three Moros, helping to initiate a rout of the remaining enemy.

For Harrison's bravery under fire, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on December 13, 1911.[27]

Political concerns were relegated to second place during the next decade. As the European war grew, so did the pressure on America to become involved. It would be that issue which enveloped the entire country and Hardin County with it.

In 1902, Professor W.E. Rogers, a thin, intelligent man, came to Savannah and reorganized the old Hardin College as the Savannah Institute. Through a variety of fundraising efforts, he was able to secure the funds for a new school building. Utilizing innovative advertising techniques, Rogers set about the task of increasing the school's enrollment. Emphasizing the importance of the institution to the community, he recruited a powerful board of directors--Dan Welch, Val Weller, Dr. J.K. Barlow and Edgar Cherry among others.[28]

He organized the teacher's institutes, originated by the state board of education, to better educate the instructors in the common schools. For several weeks each year, the institute acted as a preparatory school for county teachers. The exact impact this had on the quality of education in the county will never be fully measured, but its effect was certainly positive.

During the regular school year, the Institute operated under a strict set of regulations. Relationships between the sexes were prohibited, and social functions where intermixing was allowed were closely supervised. Older residents remember Rogers and his Institute as a man and a place dedicated to learning and brooking no deviation from the rules.[29]

Schools were operated on a schedule designed not to interfere with farm chores. Classes began in October, after the fall harvest, and summer school was often held. In 1908, the summer schools and corresponding instructors were:

Nance Bend - Max Collie
Roach - Fain Chappell
Hardin - Lilla Northcutt
Shady Hill - Laden Robinson
Russells - James Carman
Havana - Bernis Nance
Cerro Gordo - Florence Burns[30]

With the fight over the new courthouse ended and the building completed by 1907, the citizens turned their attention to other interests. The last years of the nineteenth century had seen an upsurge of sports contests in the county. Saltillo boasted the "Lily-Whites." Savannah fielded the "Sky-Blues." Baseball was the game and every community had its team. One of the earliest references to organized teams in Hardin County came in 1896:

> The Lily-Whites of Saltillo came to Savannah last week to play a match game with the Sky-Blues, and to say the least of it, Savannah was badly beaten; getting only seventeen to forty scores. The following day the Nixon Reds came down and they claim tied with the Blues, but Savannah claims a victory by two scores. The Sky-Blues go to Saltillo Friday for another game.[31]

Rivalries were bitter and the use of "ringers" pronounced. Little attention was given to proper scorekeeping and

arguments over the exact margin of victory were common. Consider the following description of a game from 1908:

> Sporting News: Speaking of baseball,--if the Clifton umpire will allow us to speak,--I suppose you have heard that some of the school boys, a few of the town boys and one of the Saltillo boys played a game against some of the Clifton boys and a professional slabman twirler from somewhere? Well, they played, and Snyder, the hireling pitcher, so the boys at Clifton said, was to win the game and stuff his purse. The boys from Hardin had trouble in connecting successfully with the leather sphere as it came, wobbling and curving and shooting and dropping about the plate.
>
> Then, under the Cooper version of the 1908 rules, the Savannah boys could be crossed out, townball style, on second base; the Clifton boys didn't have to touch third; and when the spectators would enter the diamond, or when the coach would from third toward home, he counted safe and second, when all regulations of the game declare the runner out under such conditions.
>
> But, all told, so as to make a short story long, it was rather a good game of ball.[32]

By 1910, community teams had been passed over for school teams. The Savannah Institute offered a full line of sports activities ranging from baseball to basketball and track. Among the most famous of Institute athletes was Herman DeBerry. Probably Hardin County's best known baseball player of the period, DeBerry was picked up by the Kitty League. In 1916, he was playing for the New Orleans franchise of the Southern League. Ultimately,

DeBerry played for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Later, he scouted and was a farm manager for the New York Giants organization, intermixing a career in politics along the way.[33]

Other well-known athletes during that time were Fay Fariss and Tom Williams. The *Courier* kept track of these activities and a new section of the weekly paper came into being--the sports page. The general merchandise stores began to keep a stock of sporting goods, and the development of athletics began in the county.[34]

By 1910, baseball season meant more than just going to the grass lot and watching the game. Social events honored the local teams, and were built around the games. For example, the following event was reported in the *Courier:*

> Miss Vivian Morris entertained at the home of Dr. and Mrs. G.C. Morris Thursday evening in honor of the Institute baseball team. Each of the players invited a young lady. There were in all about thirty guests. The special features were baseball terms contest and refreshments.[35]

Basketball became a major sport during the first decade of the century as well. An intramural game between the boarding students and the locals at the Savannah Institute received a great deal of attention in January, 1908:

> The locals of the Savannah Institute played an interesting contest game of basket ball[sic] against the Boarders on the Institute field Wednesday afternoon at three-thirty.
>
> The gate fees were sufficient to meet the expenses

of advertising the game and purchasing a new ball.

The feature of the game was the snap, vim, and determination with which the Boarders took the field in the first half and scored five points while the locals were kept so far from the goal that they caged the ball for only one point, and that on a free throw from foul line.

The Locals had a decided advantage in the second half and kept the ball in the enemys[sic] territory during the greater part of the division; but the defensive work of the boarders kept the basket safe from the scoring of points, and the game ended with a victory for the boarding boys.

The halves were fifteen minutes each. The officers of the game--Gray and Mangum.[36]

Theater continued to be a major form of entertainment for Hardin countians. The success of Savannah native, Mary Elizabeth Patterson on the New York stage acted as a catalyst for local productions. Although she frequently visited Hardin County, her first performance in front of the home crowd did not occur until April, 1909. On a visit to her parents, she performed in a local production of "Damon and Pythias," appearing as Calanthe. The *Courier* praised her efforts:

> Miss Patterson as Calanthe showed her marked dramatic talent in a form which delighted her many admirers at her home town. As sweetheart, bride, in grief, entreaty, ecstatic expectancy, hopeless despondency, pleading for her lover, exultation for his friendship and triumph, she fully looked the part and did the role completely.[37]

Other activities were reminiscent of those in the

previous century. In April, 1908, Ernest Hagg's *Mighty Shows* and *Trained Animal Exposition* came to Hardin County. Attractions included a daily parade and two shows a day.[38]

While events of nature, including the ravages of epidemics, were no strangers to Hardin County, they had been relatively few. Early records document none of the turbulent weather of the time. The number of tragic storms remains unknown. What must rank as the greatest natural disaster in the history of the county is well-documented--the tornado of 1909.[39]

On the afternoon of October 14, 1909, a storm of immense proportions hit eastern McNairy and western Hardin counties. Beginning as a simple thunderstorm, its intensity increased until it reached cyclonic levels. The Mt. Vinson area was first struck and some five people were left dead in its wake. Moving across the countryside, it followed the paths of Snake and Owl creeks into Hardin County and smashed into Shiloh National Park, toppling monuments and demolishing park headquarters. Captain R.W. Deene, keeper of the cemetery watched the walls of his office crumble before him as he scrambled for escape.[40]

Crossing the river at Pittsburgh Landing, it next whipped across the Nixon community and drove through the midsection of the county before playing out. Other branches of the storm cut a swath through adjacent areas.[41]

Newspaper accounts indicate that over thirty-two structures were leveled. At least sixteen people died in the storm and that many or more were injured, several

seriously. Reaction across the county was immediate. While boatloads of sightseers traveled from the untouched northern and far southern areas to view the damage, a committee of businessmen from Savannah also traveled to the affected sites and assessed the impact and necessary recovery measures. L.L. Baker, J.D. Haynes, and G.P. Chambers were appointed to make estimates of the damage. T.J. Welch, J.V. Mitchell, L.K. Freeman, L.L. Harbert, J.J. Williams, and L.V. Sevier were named as fundraisers to collect money for the homeless and injured. Help came quickly as shelter and food were provided for those who had lost their homes.[42]

Another episode of the weather gone awry occurred in 1917 when the Tennessee River completely froze. Hundreds of people gathered at the river to skate, ice fish, and walk across the Tennessee.

Other than the occasional raid on a moonshining operation, life went on uneventfully those first years of the second decade. President Woodrow Wilson had been elected to a second term on the slogan, "He kept us out of war," but signs indicated a coming change away from this isolationist policy.

Relations between Germany and America had suffered dramatically and United States neutrality in the European conflict was swiftly disappearing. In June, 1917, General John J. Pershing led the American Expeditionary Force to France. Citizens in Hardin County were faced with yet another war, and they were not reluctant to play a role.

Soon after the formal declaration of war by Congress, the editor of the Courier urged the young men of Hardin County to begin some type of military drill so they would

be better prepared when the time came. In June, the first draft registration was held. The county registered 1,209 whites and 164 African-Americans. Some 62 men from Gillis Mills alone registered. The young men were instructed in how the draft procedure.[43]

With the creation of a draft list, the state draft board selected members for the local board: Dan Welch, Dr. E.B. Walker and E.T. Craven. On August 3, 1917, the first registrants were called for physical examinations.[44] Two weeks later, the first men were called for service, and for the next two weeks, the newspaper carried lists of those accepted and rejected for service.[45] The first eight men left on September 6, 1917.[46] Henry E. Williams was appointed chairman of the county defense council. This duty entailed coordinating the activities dealing with food conservation and Red Cross work. A.M. Patterson was named head of the Liberty Loan Campaign. Several Liberty Bond issues were made, and the people were exhorted by the editor of the Courier to participate. Food Pledge week was held in late October as a method of urging Hardin countians to conserve food. Those citizens with relatives in the service were instructed in the Army and Navy Insurance Law.

Other measures came quickly. Anticipating the departure of many young men, the state legislature passed an act allowing women over 21 to fill county court clerk and other similar positions. The measure came none too soon; the men were already leaving. Among the first to go was Arthur D. Franks, who enlisted in the U.S. Army Engineering Corps.

Fuel conservation was also a major concern. The

amount of coal a person could use was tightly controlled. Automobiles were to be classified as "Public Utilities." Garages could stay open, but automobiles could not be sold. Not everyone welcomed these measures with open arms. A note in the Courier on November 30, 1917 indicates that there were some less than helpful. "Hardin County is due to get some sort of patriotic hustle on and do her bit to win the war. Just because there are some slackers is no reason for others."[47]

A Food Rationing Plan was announced in February, 1918. The plan stressed the use of meat substitutes and the purchase of Victory Bread only. Wheatless and meatless days were suggested. Wholesalers saw their inventories cut by the plan. The production of pork was emphasized, it being considered a cheap and quick meat to produce.[48]

The first African-American draftees were leaving home. On April 26, 1918, all African-American registrants were mobilized. Among these was Simon Alexander Haley, father of author Alex Haley. Haley was the son of ferryman and community leader, Alec Haley. Simon Haley, a college professor in later years, sent letters home detailing his experiences in the army. Some of these letters appeared in the Courier.[49]

W.C. Kemp was the first Hardin countian to die in combat. A native of Crump, Kemp had volunteered many months before the draft and had been in France for almost a year at the time of his death. In September, 1918, Richard Thurman died on the western front. Byron Harrison and Cecil Bain died of disease about this same time.

Other changes were occurring in Savannah and Hardin

County. Daylight Savings Time was announced in March, 1918. A note in the Courier indicated that Congress would have to meet at eleven o'clock to save the daylight as directed in their bill.[50]

The hostilities were winding down. Under the direction of General Pershing, Marshall Foch, and General Mangin, the Allied forces were making deep inroads in German defenses. The St. Mihiel Salient was reduced by Allied forces in mid-September and was quickly followed by the Meuse-Argonne offensive. On November 11, 1918, the armistice was signed, bringing the war to a close.

Despite the conclusion of the war, the dying had not yet ended. Clyde William Blount passed away at Camp Wadsworth, South Carolina. Blount was one of the last, if not the last, of Hardin countians to die in the conflict.[51] The boys were to remain overseas for several months however. Hardin countians were instructed in how to send Christmas packages to France.[52]

1. Roy Welch, interview with author, 7 August 1987, author's notes.
2. *Courier,* 21 June 1894.
3. *Courier,* 18 November 1886.
4. Roberts, Russ, *Moonshine, Murder, and Mercy* (Pickwick Dam, Tennessee: np, 1989), 15.
5. Ibid., 17, 21.
6. Ibid., 25-28.
7. Gus Thomas to E.W. Ross, Sr., 24 June 1904. Original in possession of John J. Ross, Jr. of Savannah.
8. Morgan Ross, interview with author, 6 September 1987, author's notes.
9. Roy Welch, interview with author, 7 August 1987.
10. Ibid.
11. Coffman, Ilene, ed., *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly* 5 vols. (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives and Tennessee Historical Commission), 3:179.
12. Ibid, 3:595.
13. Corlew, 380.
14. Coffman, 3:351.
15. Ibid, 3:260.
16. Coffman, 3:295-96.
17. WPA Guide, 61.
18. Coffman, 3:330, 591.
19. Hitt, 104.
20. *Appendix to the Congressional Record,* 97
21. Roy Welch, Interview with author, 7 August 1987.
22. Hitt, 104.
23. Coffman, 3:591.
24. Corlew, 439-40; Coffman, 3:591.
25. Ibid.
26. *Courier,* 24 March 1905.
27. *The Congressional Medal of Honor, Their Names, The Deeds,* (Chico, CA: Sharp & Dunnigan, 1988), .
28. Hitt, 47.
29. Roy Welch, interview with author, 7 August 1987; Hitt, 48.
30. *Courier,* 17 July 1908.
31. *Courier,* 3 September 1896.
32. *Courier,* 1 May 1908.
33. Coffman, 4:120.
34. *Courier,* 17 January 1908.
35. *Courier,* 13 May 1910.
36. Ibid.
37. *Courier,* 2 April 1909.
38. *Courier,* 10 April 1908.
39. *Courier,* 21 October 1909.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.
43. *Courier*, 20 July 1917.
44. *Courier*, 3 August 1917.
45. *Courier*, 10 August 1917; 17 August 1917.
46. *Courier*, 7 September 1917.
47. *Courier*, 30 November 1917.
48. *Courier*, 1 February 1918.
49. *Courier*, 26 April 1918.
50. *Courier*, 22 March 1918.
51. Mamie Crotts, interview by author, 16 June 1984.
52. *Courier*, 22 November 1918.

Chapter Twelve

Peace and War
1920 - 1945

The 1920s began in Hardin County with something less than a roar. With the First World War just behind them, the people were readjusting to life without food and fuel conservation, the Red Cross, and Liberty Bonds. Farmers were to feel the pinch of an ever-deepening economic crisis in the south. Manufacturers and industrialists were to taste the fruits of expansion.

Hardin countians were still faced with the fact that no railroad line had yet entered the county. Transportation routes are vitally important to the growth of industry, and without a rail line, the county's potential as a home for further industry was stunted. The next best alternative to a rail line was a bridge across the Tennessee, and that is where the people focused their attention.

While the debate over prohibition remained a live and vibrant one, it took second place to a growing movement in Hardin County. The county was over one hundred years

old, and still the Tennessee River was breached only by ferries. The people wanted a bridge at Savannah.

Probably the most significant event in Hardin County history during the twentieth century was the building and opening of the bridge at Savannah. The movement for the bridge started early in the 1920s. Like most efforts of that magnitude, it would take time. The legislative elections of 1925 centered on that specific issue. Representative Harrell C. Franks ran for re-election in 1926 on a simple platform--he promised to obtain funding to build the much-desired bridge.

Without a doubt, hopes ran high for what the bridge could do for the Hardin County economy. Early in the legislative session of 1927, Shelton sponsored a bill providing for the bridge project. Governor Austin Peay supported the measure, virtually assuring its passage. The January 7, 1927 issue of the *Courier* stoutly proclaimed, "Our Kingdom needs the bridge!"[1]

The project now one step closer to reality, the people of the county began predicting the possible effects the opening of the bridge would have. Again, according to the *Courier*,

> . . . for when the bridge is built, there can be no way to keep the Lee Highway, the Washington Highway and a number of others off Highway No. 15. Then we are figuring that this place will be so nearly the center of the world that most people and things will come here or by here to get their bearing to go elsewhere.[2]

On August 16, 1927, the bid announcements went out under the designation of Special Bridge Project 3-A and

3-C. The first project, 3-A, was for the actual construction of the bridge. The second, 3-C, called for the draining and grading of almost three miles of then State Highway 15 between Crump and Savannah.[3]

State officials opened bids on September 16, 1927 and C.G. Kershaw of Birmingham, Alabama, was awarded the contract for the actual construction of the bridge. His bid totaled $500,000. Gifford Hill, Incorporated, of Dallas, Texas, won the bid for the draining and grading of the highway between Crump and Savannah. That contract proved to be worth more than $120,000.[4]

Work commenced on November 11, 1927. Despite the uncooperative winter weather, construction went ahead quickly, at first. On April 19, 1928, a tragic accident cast a pall over the long-awaited project. A small boat carrying eight construction workers capsized in the swift waters of the river. It was a wet spring and the river was at flood stage. Passengers on the boat were Frank Paulk, B.M. Sloat, Ellis Stull, Ted Roach, Harry Wynn, Bus Harbour, Steve Barber, and Freeman Lipford. As the men fought desperately against the current, D.M. Praytor, superintendent of the project, jumped in a paddleboat in an attempt to reach them. Bob Guinn, Jr., mayor of Savannah, made a heroic attempt to rescue the men but was able to save only one of the eight men, Freeman Lipford.[5]

Construction continued through the summer of 1930. Finally, despite the loss of at least seven men, the Milo Lemert Memorial Bridge was opened on September 13, 1930. Named for a Crossville World War I hero, the dedication ceremony was attended by many former citizens and a number of Tennessee dignitaries, including

Governor Henry Horton.[6]

With the exception of the hard freeze in January of 1918 which froze the river, for the first time in the one hundred and ten years of Hardin County's past, the people of west and east Hardin County could bypass the ferry and walk across the bridge to the other side. The mental impact this structure had on the people of the county at that time is impossible to judge. The impact of this bridge as a sign of progress was immeasurable. The river had played such a prominent role in the history of the county that anything affecting that stream was of the utmost importance. Economically, during its construction, Kershaw employed many local men, giving them steady employment where there was none before.

Education was also in the forefront during the 1920s. W.E. Rogers had spent two decades imposing his will on the Hardin County educational scene. The Savannah Institute had been returned to sound financial footing. A number of his graduates, such as Herman DeBerry had gone on to the University of Tennessee. In short, the Institute became a viable school with a fine, brick building.

During the 1920s, the state legislature mandated public high schools with a four year curriculum for all counties, and in 1925 the legislature established an eight month school term and a salary schedule for teachers.[7] Realizing that the Institute could not compete with a free school, Rogers agreed to a merger between the Institute and the new Central High School. The county constructed a new building east of town, paid for with taxes, and it was ready for occupancy in 1924. Rogers accepted the

post of principal and guided the school through its first years. Rogers retired to Greeneville, Tennessee in 1930.[8]

The 1924 school building continued to house the high school until a new, comprehensive school was constructed in 1959. The old building burned to the ground in June, 1987.[9]

The people of Hardin County confronted other changes during the 1920s. In 1926, light poles were being implanted, a generator plant was built, and an engineer was contracted to wire the houses. Williams Brothers made all these arrangements. The so-called "state aid highway" between Savannah and Waynesboro was opened in August, 1926. An elaborate dedication ceremony was held punctuated with speeches by local officials.[10]

Internal improvement was truly the cry of the decade. As the movement for the new bridge moved forward, so did demands for road improvements. A planned road from Washington to Memphis was expected to bring a great deal of traffic to the county, and the people wanted the county road system upgraded.

One of Tennessee's claims to fame has been the enduring legacy of moonshining in the hills and hollows. Wildcat liquor was nothing new to Hardin County. Prohibitionists had seized control of the legislature by 1909, and prohibition, imposed on Tennesseans that year by the Holladay bill, merely drove it further underground.[11] Untaxed whiskey had been made for decades. It must be remembered, however, that men who fought in the Revolution were given the right to make untaxed whiskey. Families considered it a right to be handed down from generation to generation. Such was not

the case, and hence came some of the problems. The area south of Counce on the Tennessee-Mississippi line, an area marked by timber-covered, rolling hills, was known as a hotbed of moonshiners. Central Hardin County had a similar reputation.

Temperance alliances had been active since the 1870s, and Prohibition brought no end to them. The violence associated with the wildcat industry also continued unabated. One of the best remembered incidents, involving the distilling of illegal liquor, occurred in 1927.

Federal prohibition agents obtained information that Alexander Tidwell was making moonshine. Tidwell, a man in his mid-fifties, was confronted by Sheriff J.O. Dickson and two federal agents. According to newspaper accounts, Tidwell, rather than surrender, fired on the officers and in the ensuing exchange of fire, Tidwell was killed. Although this was not the first death associated with wildcat liquor, it was deeply felt. The editor of the *Courier* said,

> The liquor traffic has become a serious menace to the community's development and prosperity. The loss in a material way is bad enough, but the effect on our morals is worse . . .. We all regret to hear of a death and especially a violent death, but if there is no other way, it must surely be.[12]

Stories are still told of how moonshiners hid their stills in those days. One wildcatter, learning of a planned raid on his establishment, buried his apparatus and supply of moonshine in a neighbor's field. The next day, he calmly suggested that his neighbor plow in another field.

The neighbor quickly understood and moved his team and plow to another site for the day. Rumor has it that some of the crossties brought into town for sale were not always solid wood. They may have had "liquid" centers.[13]

The making of untaxed liquor continued to be a problem for thirty or forty more years. Exact figures are unavailable, but estimates agree that for many years, moonshining was indeed a major cash crop, and one distiller's product was called for by name in Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati.14 The changing times, however, brought new crops. Traffic in marijuana replaced moonshine as the primary illicit industry in the county in the mid 1970s.

During the early 1900s, Alec Haley and Lee Smith gave land for the organization of a Disciples of Christ Church in the Newtown area. The church played a major role in the community. Only two preachers from the early days can be remembered, a minister named Hall from Dyersburg and one named Cortez from Selmer preached at the church during its first year.[15]

Some of the last of the former slaves were dying. Aunt Rose Graham, who had belonged in her youth to the James Graham family, died at the age of 96 in 1908. Her progeny included 11 children, 39 grandchildren, and 20 great grandchildren.[16] Brady Davy, once the property of the Davy family of west Hardin, lived to the ripe old age of 114 before he died in Hookers Bend.[17]

According to Newtown resident Jim Dan Taylor, Amos Benton, Dan Tatum, and Tom Luten were three of the most influential African-Americans during the twenties and into the Depression era. The percentage of

African-Americans in the county has always been small, though this has not apparently brought much cohesiveness to this segment.[18]

The stock market crash of 1929 only slightly impacted on the people of Hardin County. While the tremendous Wall Street crash on "Black Friday" was just one in a series of crises, it was of little importance, initially, to the people of the county alongside the rising flood waters of the Tennessee.

An extremely wet fall caused the Tennessee to reach flood stage, and it was this, rather than the economic news from far-off New York, that captured headlines in Savannah and Hardin County. The county was so far removed from the centers of national finance that usually the county did not feel the effects of economic panic until some years later, and the optimistic attitude fostered by the construction of the bridge was sure to dampen any bad news from the North.[19]

Affairs seemed normal in those immediate pre-Depression days. The school was set to open in late October. The cotton crop was down slightly, perhaps due to the unusually-damp fall. "Chasing Through Europe" and "Pride of Pawnee" were showing at the Savannah Theater. Prices were low: Two hundred twenty weight overalls cost 89 cents a pair; cotton pick sacks of eight ounce duck were 90 cents each; and at D.J. Hughes's store pawn-broker felt hats cost 88 cents.[20]

The South, Hardin County included, faced economic problems before the stock market crash, but depression soon swept across the region. Bank failures became common. According to Corlew, ". . . by 1931, many

people in Nashville, Memphis, Knoxville, and Chattanooga were without adequate food, clothing, and shelter." Cotton, always a primary crop in Hardin County dropped "from a high of 35 cents per pound in 1919 to 6 cents in 1932."[21] Such a decline could not help but severely wound the county's agricultural-based economy.

Men who had recently founded and run their own businesses were soon seen sharecropping. Small shopowners were unable to make ends meet and only the hardiest of the country stores survived the economic decline. Factories laid off workers. Just as it had been all along for many Hardin countians, making a living was something in which the entire family participated.[22]

The organization of the agricultural extension service and home demonstration clubs played a large role in county life and newspapers of the period were filled with columns offering suggestions for the small farmer and homemaker. Though the economy was falling at a rapid rate, internal improvements continued for a short while as the road from Shiloh to Corinth was paved.

An agricultural forecast by the county agent in 1930 was rather bleak. No change was foreseen in the cotton situation and Tennessee farmers were told to continue "their program of reducing their acreage as they increase the yield per acre."[23] Hog production was seen to be profitable, as was the growing of sweet potatoes. Owners of timber land were cautioned to keep their lands thinned out to allow for maximum growth of the strong trees. Poultry producers were advised to expect low prices.[24]

Time passed and the National Recovery Act (NRA), the Bank Holiday, and the plethora of alphabet agencies

created by the Roosevelt administration impacted on Hardin countians. A Civilian Conservation Corps camp was located at Selmer, and some Hardin countians found work there. Others went to the Smokey Mountain National Park, and some of the county's young women worked as nurses at Western State Hospital in Bolivar.[25]

The most lasting impact of any of these agencies came with the creation, in 1933, of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Created "to develop the Tennessee River system in the interest of navigation, flood control, and national defense, and to generate electricity to avert waste of water power," more importantly, it spurred one specific project, the impact of which on Hardin County may never be fully measured--the Pickwick Dam.[26]

Hardin County was created from the tributaries and river bottoms of the Tennessee. The county's life was tied to the river's flowing waters. Any change in the river certainly meant a change in the life of Hardin countians. The dam at Pickwick stands with the bridge at Savannah as one of the most significant events in the county's history.

Frank Teuton speculates that a visit by Henry Ford and Thomas Edison, and Ford's interest in the Muscle Shoals, was the catalyst for the TVA program.[27] Whatever the actual genesis, an area in the Pyburn's Bluff region was selected for construction of the dam. While there were many workers brought in from out of town, a number of local men found employment at the construction site. Construction was completed in 1938. As with many other areas impacted by TVA dams, Hardin County lost a town to the project. Hamburg, south of

Pittsburgh Landing, was swallowed up by the new Pickwick Lake.

The dam would create far more changes for the county than anyone could have predicted in the 1930s. Its immediate impact, on flood control and electric power, is almost taken for granted now. The changes wrought by the recreation industry cannot yet be fully measured.

The Depression brought many changes to the lives of Hardin countians. Sharecroppers and land sales abounded. The rural folk did a variety of chores to help make ends meet. Some people found it necessary to leave the area. By 1930, northern firms were regularly advertising steady work with no lay-offs for Tennesseans.[28] Everyone in the family went into the fields to chop cotton and pick at harvest time. Every penny went into the meager family treasury. Those lucky enough to secure jobs in town, like John Welch and Jim Dan Taylor, worked at places like the Savannah Theater for what seemed little pay.[29]

Christmas time brought little but a happier feeling. Stockings were stuffed with an orange, or banana, and a few nuts. Often, county residents recall, there were no presents by the side of the slight stockings. The anticipation of that stocking and what it would hold was no less strong, and probably stronger than that of children in more affluent times.[30]

Throughout the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, Republicans held sway in Hardin County. The Democrats found it difficult to obtain much of a foothold despite Roosevelt's popularity. Typically, the Democrats maintained the state senate seat and the Republicans held Hardin County's seat in the lower house. Although Bob

Guinn, Jr., probably the preeminent politician in the county, was a Democrat, the party proved singularly unable to take the legislative seat.

John A. Moore, a teacher and farmer from Saltillo, was elected to the state house in 1918. He served until 1923.[31] He was followed by Harrell Cherry Franks, of Gillises Mill in the southeastern section of the county. Franks, who owned a half-interest in a cotton gin, was instrumental in the fight for the bridge. He did not seek reelection in 1928 and was succeeded by insurance agent Carter Warren, another Republican. Franks, however, returned to the legislature in 1931 for a single term.[32]

Hardin countian John A. Shelton was Franks's counterpart in the state senate during this time period. A lawyer in Savannah, Shelton had also taught school. He served until 1929.[33]

Thepher J. White, of Saltillo, replaced Franks in the state House of Representatives, serving from 1933 to 1937. A prominent Republican in the county, he also served on the state Republican executive committee.[34]

During World War II, Hardin County was represented in the lower house by John Herman DeBerry, the county's best known athlete. DeBerry worked as a scout for the New York Giant organization after a successful career in professional baseball. In 1940, he served as a presidential elector on Wendell Wilkie's ticket.[35] He was followed by businessman Farris Stafford in 1943. Stafford, superintendent of the Saltillo Manufactoring Company, served two terms in the general assembly.[36]

Hardin County was represented in the state senate by Frances H. Blount, a former county court clerk. Blount,

who had also worked for the Works Projects Administration during the Roosevelt years was a Democrat from Savannah.[37]

A major event in county politics occurred in 1937 on the county school board. Dewey G. White was elected school superintendent over incumbent J.C. Johnson on August 6, 1936. Refusing to accept defeat, Johnson filed a number of lawsuits citing irregularities in the election. Ultimately, all suits save one were found in favor of White. Two sets of teachers were hired, one set by Johnson and one set by White. An ouster suit was filed against the board of education, who were strong Johnson partisans. Johnson refused to give any school records to White. Some sense of the emotions at the time can be found in this preamble to a resolution passed by the Johnson-dominated school board:

> Whereas, it appears that one D.G. White is about to enter the office of County Superintendent of Public Instruction for the County of Hardin and Whereas, such entry is without a mandate of the people, and he is coming into the office in the capacity of a naked usurper and contrary to the principles of free government . . .[38]

After a flurry of lawsuits and the hiring of separate slates of bus drivers and teachers, the matter was settled, but not without a great deal of turmoil.

The Depression spanned a long period. Agriculture in the south was affected by the passage of two acts of Congress--the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act in 1936, and the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, an act designed to raise farm prices. Though these efforts

assisted Hardin County farmers, the major factor in retrieving agriculture, and indeed the economy, was the Second World War.[39]

World War II affected Hardin County in many of the same ways the first war had. While only a few of the county's young men saw action in the first war and hundreds in the second, many of the same restrictions were reborn.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, as the enlistment offices were filling up, the first wave of rationing hit the county. Just as in the first war, food, fuel, and other commodities would be sharply curtailed. Red Cross activities again flourished and bandages were prepared with other necessities for the frontline troops. Shoes, sugar, and coffee were among the other items restricted. Ration books were distributed for everything from sugar to gasoline.

The young men began leaving within a couple of months after Pearl Harbor; the women were left behind to pass the time with church work, making bandages (a grim task), and collecting money for the Red Cross. Some women taught school. All women waited for word from Europe and the Pacific.

Among the casualties of the war were Eldridge Smith, Warner Wright Harrison, and Donald Duncan, who died at the Battle of the Bulge. William Duke, in the field artillery, died in the days following the Normandy invasion. Sergeant Otis Barnhill was also killed in action. Creed Walker, a doctor from Savannah, died in England. Disease was less of a threat in the Second World War, but combat deaths more than made up for it.[40]

Vernon McGarity, born at Right, though he moved to Stewart County later, won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic stand at the Battle of the Bulge. McGarity, in that winter of 1944-45, refused to retreat with his platoon before the German onslaught. Holding their ground with other units, they bought time for the Allied forces to regroup and counterattack. McGarity and his men were captured and imprisoned.[41]

Although the county had lost a number of men in the first war, losses in the second war were even more substantial. Those who died in World War II gave their lives in a fight to protect the very things that Hardin County was built on--freedom and independence.

1. *Courier,* 7 January 1927.
2. Ibid.
3. *Courier,* 16 August 1927.
4. *Courier,* 20 September 1927.
5. *Courier,* 24 April 1928.
6. *Courier,*
7. Corlew, 527.
8. Hitt, 47-8.
9. *Courier,* June 1987.
10. *Courier,* August 1926.
11. WPA Guide, 61; Corlew, 429.
12. *Courier,* 1927.
13. Roy Welch interview, 7 August 1987.
14. Williams to Hays, 1995.
15. Jim Dan Taylor, interview by author, 9 August 1987. Author's notes.
16. *Courier,* 11 September 1908.
17. *Courier,* 14 February 1908.
18 Jim Dan Taylor, interview with author, 9 August 1987.
19. *Courier,* 29 October 1929; 5 November 1929.
20. *Courier,* 30 September 1929; 7 October 1929; 21 October 1929; and 28 October 1929.
21. Corlew, 468, 471.
22. Mamie Crotts, interview with author, 16 June 1984; Roy Welch, interview with author, 7 August 1987.
23. *Courier,* 1930.
24. *Courier,* 1930.
25. Roy Welch, interview with author, 7 August 1987.
26. WPA Guide, 100.
27. Teuton, 67.
28. *Courier,* 16 February 1930.
29. John Welch, interview with author, 16 March 1992.
30. John Welch, interview with author, 16 March 1992; Elva Stricklin, interview with author, 16 June 1984; Mamie Crotts, interview with author, 16 June 1984.
31. Coffman, 3:487.
32. Ibid., 3:237, 696.
33. Ibid., 3:598-99.
34. Ibid., 4:408.
35. Ibid., 4:120.
36. Ibid., 4:359-60.
37. Ibid., 4:38.
38. Eason v. Hardin County Board of Education, Court of Appeals, petition for certiorari, assignments of error and brief, 7.
39. Corlew, 481, 513.
40. *Cemetery Census,* 250, 412, 360.
41. *Congressional Medal of Honor,* .

Chapter Thirteen

Post World War II

The years after the war were ones of re-examination and re-dedication. Returning veterans had new vistas open to them through educational assistance programs unseen before in America. Lives torn apart during the war were rewoven and made new. For Hardin County, the end of the war meant the renewal of the constant progress which had marked her history.

From the mid 1920s until the 1980s, one of the most influential men in Hardin County was Mayor Bob Guinn, Jr. Guinn served many terms as mayor of Savannah and was a political leader in the Democratic party for decades. A close friend of Gordon Browning and, later, Jim McCord and Frank Clement, Guinn was instrumental in the acquisition of many projects in the county.

The importance of a strong voice for Hardin County within the Democratic party cannot be overemphasized. Since Hardin was traditionally a Republican county, and the state was heavily Democratic, Guinn's friendship with

the party elite in Nashville kept the county from suffering. Guinn also played an active role in the implementation of desegregation in the county schools.[42]

After the war, Republicans continued their dominance in legislative races. James "Archie" Gammill, a native of Nixon, served in the lower house from 1947 to 1953. A graduate of Central High School and a veteran of the Second World War, Gammill operated a grocery store in Savannah for many years.[43]

For forty-eight of the first fifty-two years in the century, the Republican party held the legislative seat in Hardin County. Then, in 1952, James Irwin Bell, a fifty-two year old Democrat won the seat which had eluded his party for so long. Bell was to hold that seat longer than any man had to that date. For fourteen years, J.I. Bell represented the people of Hardin County.

A graduate of the Savannah Institute, Bell attended the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. He served in both world wars, rising to the rank of major in World War II. Among his legislative accomplishments was sponsorship of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. In 1963, he was named as one of the top four Tennessee legislators by the Tennessee Press Association. Governor Ray Blanton presented Bell with an "Outstanding Tennessean Award" in 1979. He died in 1992.[44]

One of the foremost Republicans during the last two decades has been Granville Hinton. Having served during the fifties as mayor and vice-mayor of Savannah, and as a city commissioner, Hinton was elected to the legislature in 1966, succeeding J.I. Bell. An insurance executive, Hinton served as assistant House Minority Whip while in

the legislature. Later, Hinton was appointed Commissioner of Conservation by Governor Winfield Dunn. During the Lamar Alexander years, Hinton served as an executive assistant to the popular governor. He died in April, 1996.[45]

Progress continued after the war. The construction of the dam at Pickwick in the late 1930s spurred the economy, and the postwar period became a time to take stock and reorganize. In 1947, one ice cream factory, one shoe manufacturer, one ice company, one button manufacturer, and three lumber concerns were located in Hardin County. This does not take into account retail stores or the dam employees.[46]

A courthouse fire destroyed the 43 year old building in 1949. Daniels Construction Company, of Birmingham, Alabama built a new courthouse, dedicated in 1952. Designed by Marr and Holman, of Nashville, the building consists of brick from Virginia, marble from Italy, and slate shingles from Vermont, all at a cost of $8,000,000.[47]

The late forties also saw the reorganization of the old state militia into the Tennessee National Guard. For many years the militia served as the reserve branch of the military, under state control. Elijah Walker Ross Sr. served as a colonel in the state militia. The creation of the National Guard provided a military branch connected to the federal government, yet which retained a tie to the state.

After World War II, the Guard began the process of addressing its changing, and more challenging, mission. Robert D. Hays, a Gibson County native and veteran of the Second World War, was selected as the first full-time employee of the National Guard in Hardin County. Perry

M. Harbert, a local lawyer, donated land on Harbert Drive for an armory building. A new and modern armory, near the airport, was dedicated in 1987.

By 1957, there were nine industries in the county. A shirt factory was located at Saltillo, and Savannah had a toy manufacturer. Over the next sixteen years, industry in the county more than doubled. Counce, Saltillo, Shiloh, and Savannah all had manufactoring plants by 1973.[48]

The most notable addition on the industrial scene was the establishment of the Tennessee River Pulp and Paper Mill at Counce during the early 1960s. One hundred percent of the respondents to an informal survey of county residents listed the arrival of this mill as one of the most important events of the last three decades. The mill now employs over 600 people and plays a large role in the county's economy.

Another significant event during those years was the addition of a bridge, named for the late Senator Estes Kefauver, over the Pickwick Dam in the summer of 1963. Considered by residents as pivotal in the county's development, the new bridge opened Savannah to the southwest portion of the county. No longer were people forced to patronize Corinth, Mississippi merchants because of the long drive around the river to Savannah or the equally inconvenient ferry ride across the river. The dam bridge significantly reduced the mileage to the county seat.

While county schools were racially segregated well into the sixties, the county saw few racial disturbances. Although the percentage of African-Americans had always been small, outbursts of a racial nature were not

common. School Superintendent Homer Snodgrass, Bob Guinn, and others assisted in bringing a young African-American teacher, Otis Floyd, into the county system.[49]

Before court-ordered integration of schools began, Snodgrass, Floyd, and other community leaders made the decision to combine Dunbar High School, the traditionally African-American institution, and Savannah Central High School and other high schools in the county to become Hardin County High School. Floyd was brought in as assistant principal and the integration was successful. Later, that same Otis Floyd helped design integration plans, based on the Hardin County model, for other counties while working for the state education department.[50] Floyd eventually was promoted to the post of president of Tennessee State University, later becoming Chancellor of the State Board of Regents, a position he held at the time of his sudden death in 1993.

When other state school systems were fighting court-imposed deadlines for desegregation, Hardin County had already settled the issue. The county was also among the first, if not the first, to send African-American teachers to Tennessee Education Association leadership conferences.[51]

Although Otis Floyd ultimately became Assistant School Superintendent under Homer Snodgrass, it was not until the early 1980s that an African-American won elective office in the county, when J.D. Cherry was named to the Savannah City Commission. He was elected mayor in 1993.

42. Otis Floyd, interview with author, 25 September 1987. Author's notes.
43. Coffman, 4:161.
44. Ibid., 5:34-35.
45. Ibid., 5:216-17.
46. *Savannah Phone Directory*, 1947.
47. Williams and Patterson, 5.
48. *Savannah Phone Directory*, 1947-1973.
49. Otis Floyd, interview with author, 25 September 1987.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.

Chapter Fourteen

The County Today

From just over two thousand residents in 1820, Hardin County has had significant growth, particularly in the last twenty years. With over 18,000 residents in 1970, the 1990 census figures reached over 22,600, an increase of some 22.5 percent or more. Savannah now has a population of almost 7,000. Saltillo claims over 400 citizens.[1]

According to 1990 U.S. Census data, Hardin countians still lived primarily in the rural areas, though less than ten percent resided on farms. Females held a slight edge over males with some 52 percent of the population. The bulk of the county's citizens fall between the ages of 25 and 59. As of 1990, some 16,872 people in the county were native Tennesseans; only sixty-three residents were of foreign birth. Most Hardin countians trace their ancestry to Ireland.[2]

Industry is located at Counce, Savannah, Shiloh, Saltillo, and Pickwick. Over nine hundred people are

employed in the clothing industry at various concerns. Among the types of items manufactured in the county are plastics, toys, concrete, restaurant equipment, chemicals, mobile homes, and publishing.

In terms of health care, Savannah has one hospital with over 80 beds. Fifteen physicians serve the county as do seven dentists. A number of specialists are available to county residents. Four licensed nursing homes with a total of 210 beds supplement the county's health care needs.[3]

WDNX (FM) serves the county from Olive Hill. At Savannah, WKWX (FM) and WORM (AM & FM) broadcast. WORM is the oldest station in the county, first broadcasting in 1956.[4]

A construction boom began in early 1987. The recreation industry is still in a growth mode. With commercial building growing at a phenomenal rate for an area such as Savannah, major changes are occurring in the county.

Banking has been especially strong in Hardin County. Just a few years after the founding of the Bank of Savannah, Citizens Bank was chartered in 1904. Now known as Third National Bank, the institution was headed for many years by Con Welch. First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Hardin County was chartered on July 1, 1967 with Emmet Yeiser, Jr. as president and R.P. Shackelford as vice-president. Still in operation today as Central Bank, B.W. Williams serves as president and R.P. Shackelford, Jr. as vice-president. In January of 1972, Hardin County Bank was chartered. Dr. John H. Gallien, Edwin Ledbetter, Granville Hinton, Carl T. Tallent, David S. Gardner, C.E. Roser, William Qualls, Robert B. Smith,

J.T. Seymour, and Eddie Shaw were the original Board of Directors.

Hardin County has not lacked for political powers. Bob Guinn, Jr., Granville Hinton, and others have wielded political muscle. Hardin County native Ray Blanton, who served three terms in the U.S. Congress, was elected governor of Tennessee in 1974, serving one term before opting not to attempt a re-election bid. Under his administration, United Nation officials made their first ever trip as a body outside of New York, visiting Nashville in 1976. Unemployment decreased and state spending on education increased during his tenure.[5] Blanton was later convicted of selling liquor licenses in Davidson County while governor. After his release from prison, he launched an unsuccessful bid for Congress in 1988 in upper west Tennessee.[6]

Although the old time political boss has disappeared, the county does have strong leaders. Such leadership in the Republican party is provided by Dr. John Lay and Sue and Grady Odem. The county gave Richard Nixon a four to one margin in 1972. In 1976, Jimmy Carter eked out a bare victory over Ford. Ronald Reagan captured an equally narrow win in 1980, and a slightly larger victory in 1984.[7]

Randy Rinks currently holds the legislative seat for Hardin County. Joe Barker is the Hardin County Executive. Connie Stephenson is the County Court Clerk. Among prominent businessmen are Henry Williams, III, Bo Higginbotham, Kent Collier, and Con Welch. Other successful businessmen of the modern era have been Harrison Perry, Carl Tallent, Jarvis Williams, Hardin

Hughes, and R.P. Shackelford, Jr. For many years, Elijah Walker Ross Sr. was recognized as one of the finest attorneys in Tennessee. His grandson, John J. Ross Jr., still staffs the family firm.

Possibly the most dramatic and historic trial in 20th century Hardin County was the criminal trial of sitting sheriff David Seaton. Seaton, a life-long Hardin countian whose father had also been sheriff, established a number of county-wide drug education programs, but in the spring of 1987, he was tried and convicted of conspiracy to sell marijuana and possession of marijuana with the intent to resell. While many Tennessee sheriffs faced similar circumstances during the 1980s, this was the first instance in the 20th century when a current Hardin County official was tried on criminal charges.[8] The current sheriff is Sammy Davidson.

Today, the county has a modern high school complex, and an organized and smooth functioning school system. Numerous modern school buildings dot the county's landscape, including West Hardin Elementary School. School officials face a school system and an economy ever in need of funds. The continuing struggle to provide a quality education requires large sums of money.

In addition to the public school system, a vocational-technical school is located at Crump. The institution is a part of the statewide system of vocational schools and provides an alternative to more academically-oriented educational paths.

Primarily still a rural county, Hardin has contributed significantly to the state's agricultural base. Ranked seventeenth in the state in sorghum production, the county

placed in the top 30 in soybean, wheat, corn, and cotton in 1984.[9]

In livestock, the county had thirteen thousand head of cattle in 1984, over six thousand of which were beef cows. The county ranked eighth and ninth respectively in breeding hogs and in total swine production.[10]

Pickwick Lake, the pleasurable byproduct of Pickwick Dam, provides ultramodern boating and recreation facilities. The resort area contains 1,440 acres and offers ten two bedroom cabins as well as a seventy-five room inn. The state bought the original Pickwick Village, used by dam construction workers, in 1969 and began to develop the site. Facilities include a beautiful, eighteen-hole golf course and camping sites.

Fishing and boating are popular activities at Pickwick. A large dock with many slips is provided for the boating enthusiast. Fishing on the lake is some of the best in the state. Sauger, crappie, large and small mouth bass are all caught in the lake.

Bruton Branch Primitive Area is a 347 acre addition to the Pickwick property. The site has a launching ramp, primitive camp sites, and a bathhouse.

One other site, historical rather than recreational, is Shiloh National Battlefield and Cemetery. Commemorating this pivotal battle in the western theater, the reserve covers over 3,000 acres. It is operated by the National Park Service and thousands of visitors walk its many trails each year.

Another recent addition to the county's cultural base is the Tennessee River Museum. Located in the old post office building, the collection depicts the history of the

river to include the construction of Pickwick Dam. Numerous artifacts, retrieved from the river bed, are on display.

Every summer, the Fiddler's Jamboree fills Savannah, as musicians from around the country gather to try their hand with the fiddle.

1. U.S. Census, 1970, Hardin County, Tennessee; U.S. Census, 1990, Hardin County, Tennessee.
2. Ibid.
3. Crutchfield, 219, 220.
4. Ibid., 286.
4. Corlew, 595-96.
6. Hays, Tony, "The System and Ray Blanton" *Southern Magazine* August (1988): 25-27.
7. Crutchfield, 94.
8. Hays, Tony, "The Sins of David Seaton" *Southern Magazine* January (1988), 20 passim.
9. Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Annual Report, 1984.
10. Ibid.

Conclusion

Hardin County's history is a rich one. The first county to be organized from the Chickasaw Purchase, its strategic location brought the first major clash in the western theater during the Civil War. In the span of just a few days in April, some of the most famous men in United States history gathered on the banks of the Tennessee River--Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, James A. Garfield, Lew Wallace, Albert Sidney Johnston, Pierre Gustave Toussaint Beauregard, and Henry Stanley, the future journalist made famous by his encounter with Dr. David Livingston in Africa. In the next century, the county played a role in the TVA program, an endeavor which still impacts millions of lives every day. As a part of the original Southwest, as host to the battle at Shiloh, as a participant in the great experiment of TVA, Hardin County and its people have played a significant role in the nation's history. But, the measure of a county's history cannot be taken by the slide rule of a national history. A county's history is a much more personal legacy.

Sentimentality is a dangerous emotion for a historian. It can cloud judgement, sway interpretation, but to avoid sentimentality in the writing of local history is problematic at best. Local history is more intimate by nature, more a part of heart and soul than just a retelling of yesterday's headlines. It is not the story of great movements, but the people around the corner who joined those movements; it is not the strategy of a great general, but our great grandfather's farm where that general's strategy was played out. It is flesh and blood, hopes, dreams, and

ambitions. Perhaps Ross Ballew, a Savannah native, summed it up best when he described what it was like when his family moved from Savannah to Nashville:

> When one leaves a community as a child, little remains. In time I adjusted to the bitumin laden Nashville air and to neighbors who did not seem to know much: didn't know for instance, that Hank DeBerry had caught Dazzy Vance for the Brooklyn Dodgers, or hadn't walked into the delicious chill of the ice plant across from Judge Ross's home on a hot August day, or that Miss Essie Weller had saved my life when I was a baby. Eventually, I forgave their ignorance.[1]

The history of Hardin County is about a river, and the people who lived on that river's banks and along the tributaries and feeder streams. It is about Hank DeBerry and Judge E.W. Ross and Miss Essie Weller. It is about James Hardin and David Robinson and Lon Scott. It is, finally, about home.

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Appendix One

State Legislators

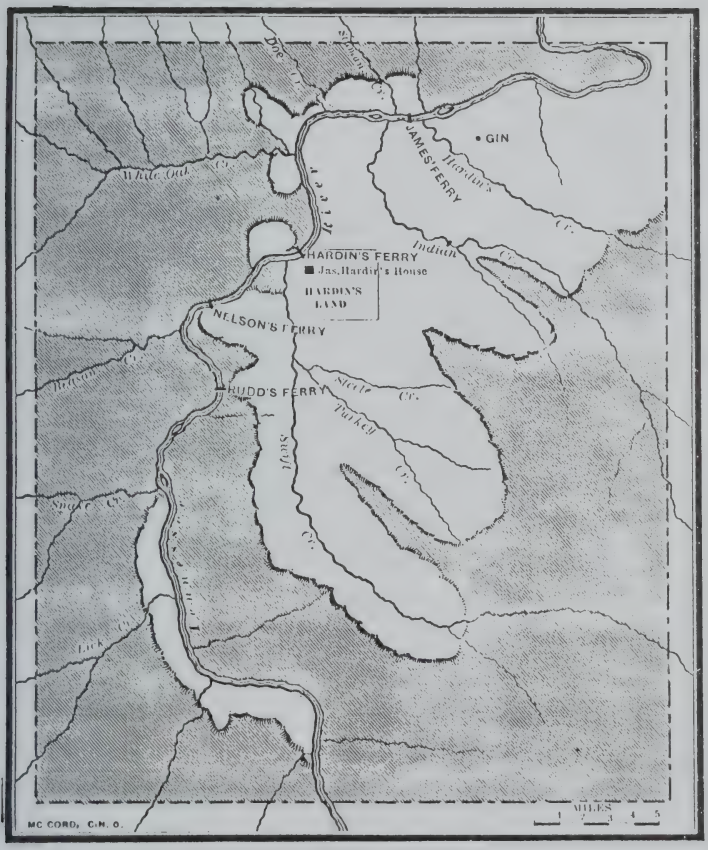
House

Burns, William (Wayne) 1821-23
Barnes, James 1823-25
Hardin, Benjamin 1825-27 & 1831-33 (Wayne) Whig
Davis, William 1827-31 (Lawrence)
Hardin, Benjamin 1831-33 (Wayne) Whig
Halford, Bradley 1833-35 (Lawrence)
Harrison, Orville 1835-37 Whig
Gibbs, Conrad C. 1837-39 Whig
McGinnis, Christopher H. 1839-47 Democrat
Smith, Daniel 1847-51 Democrat
Hamilton, George M. 1851-53 Democrat
Broyles, Conway Sevier 1853-55 Whig (later Democrat)
Brazelton, Benjamin G. 1855-57 Know-Nothing
Carter, James M. 1857-59 and 34th (Confederate) Democrat (Unionist)
Roberts, David A. 1859-61 Democrat
Maxwell, Thomas 1865-67 Unionist
Pitts, Alfred 1867-69 Republican
Hinkle, William Fields 1869-73 Conservative
Riggs, Samuel 1873-75 Republican (Decatur)
Herring, Daniel William 1875-77 Democrat
Yancey, Edward G. 1879-1881 Democrat
Neely, H.B. 1881 (Decatur) Republican
Martin, James 1881-85 Democrat
Hanna, James A. 1885-89 Republican
Hinkle, Henry Rayburn 1889-91 Republican
Watson, Will J. 1891-93 Republican
Mitchell, James Columbus 1893-94 Republican
Smith, Warren 1895-97 Republican
Young, James Thomas 1899-1901 Democrat
DeFord, Risden Davis 1901-1903 Republican
Shannon, George T. 1903-1905 Republican
Hardin, Watkins 1905-1909 Democrat
Hoover, Charles P. 1909-1913 Republican
Scott, Lon Allen 1913-1919 Republican
Moore, John A. 1919-1923 Republican

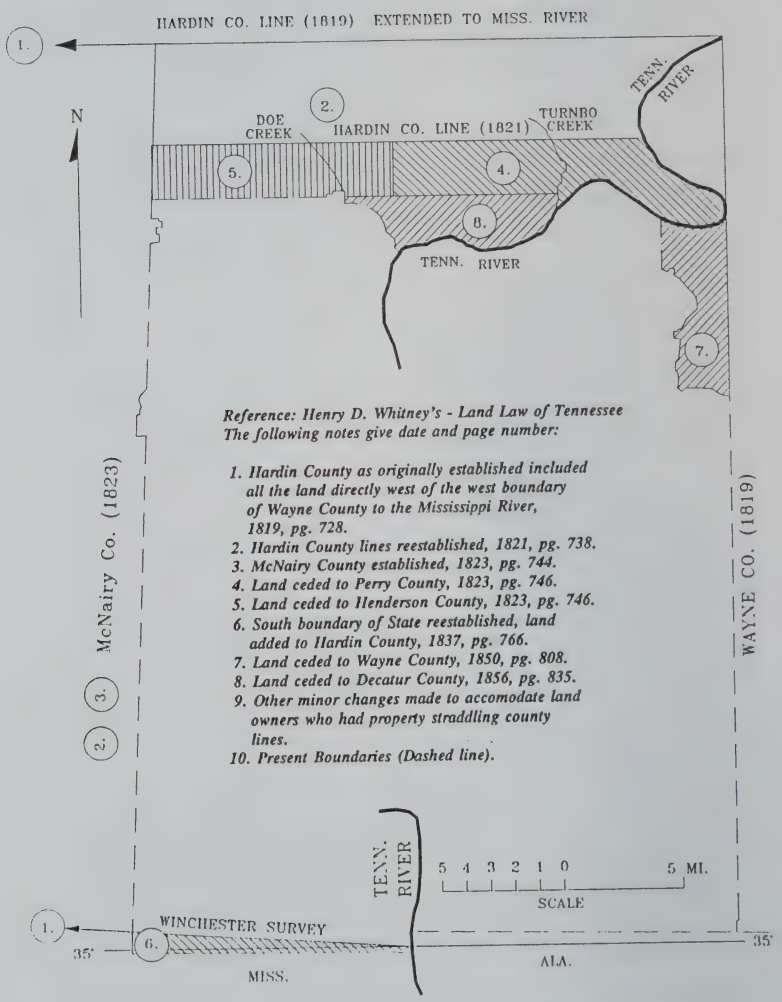
Sloan, Warren 1923-1925 Republican
Franks, Harrell Cherry 1925-1929 Republican
Warren, Carter 1929-1931 Republican
Franks, Harrell 1931-1933 Republican
White, Thepher J. 1933-1937 Republican
DeFord, James Edward 1937-1941 Republican
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Gammill, James Archie 1947-1953 Republican
Bell, James Irwin 1953-1967 Democrat
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Appendix Two

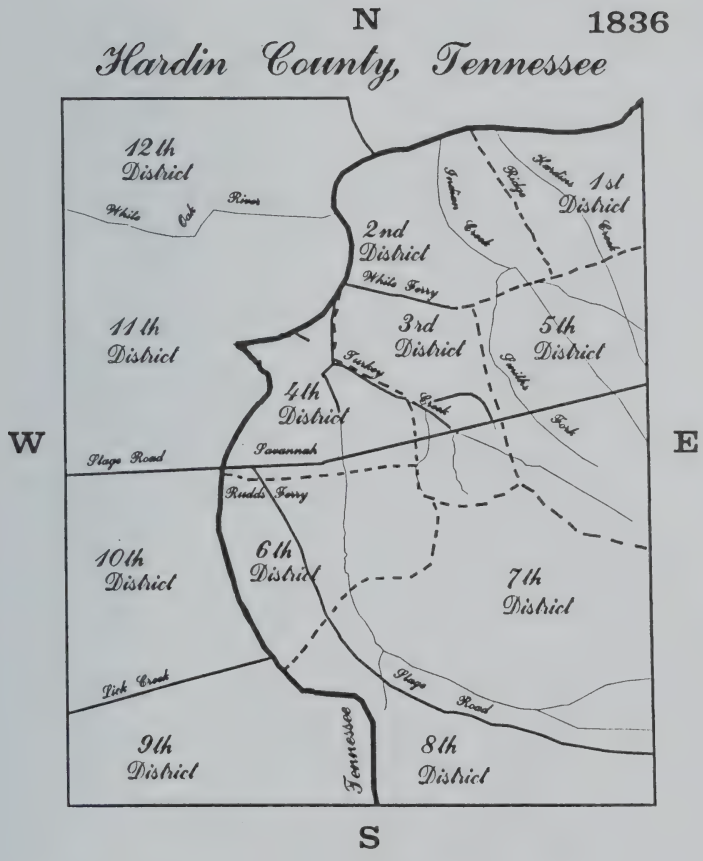
Map of Hardin County in 1820



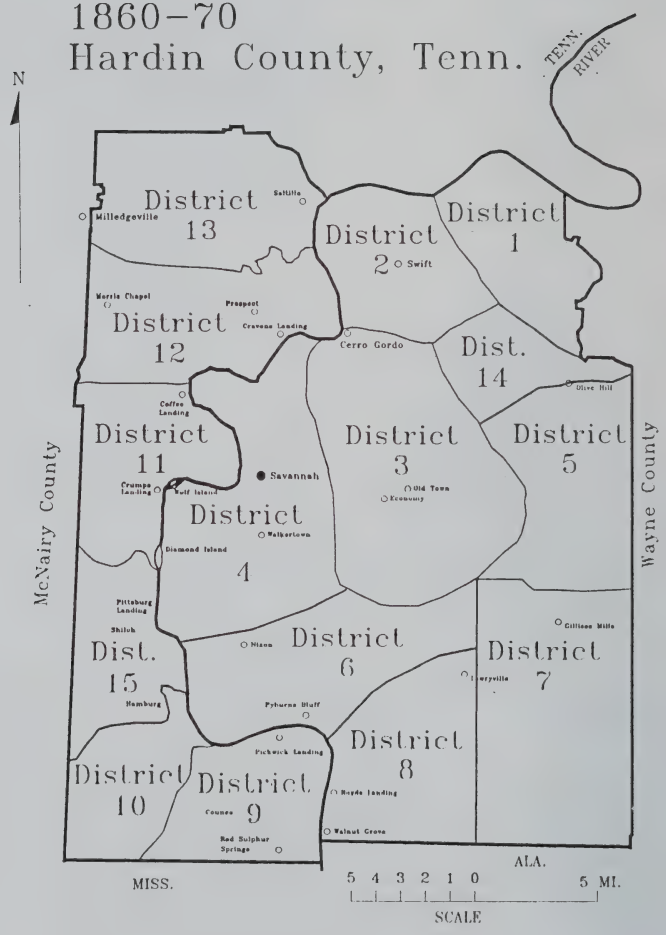
Source: *A History of Hardin County* by B.G. Brazelton



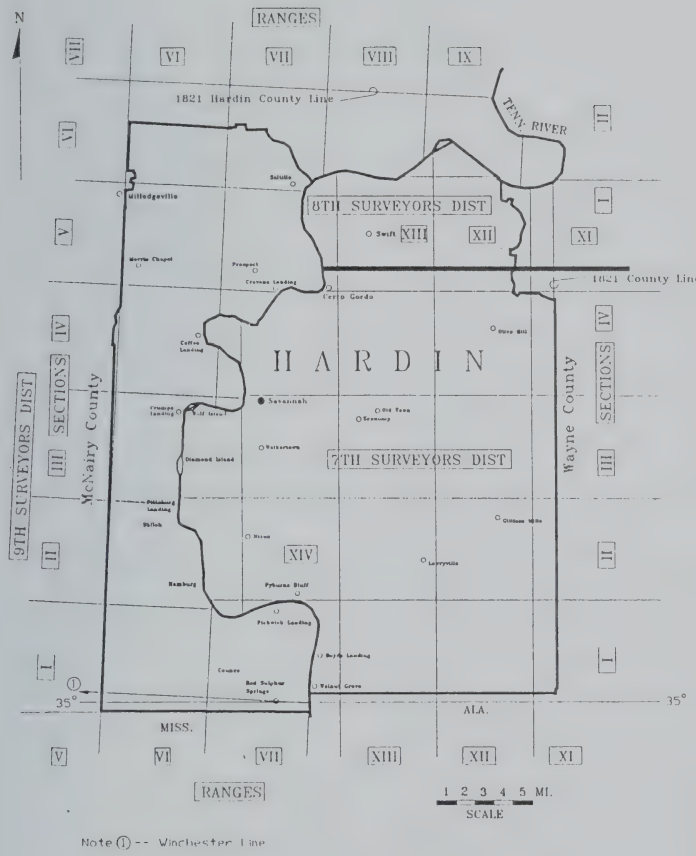
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Genealogical Research Maps of Hardin County Tennesse
by James H. Hanna



Source:
Genealogical Research Maps of Hardin County Tennesse
by James H. Hanna



Source:
Genealogical Research Maps of Hardin County Tennesse
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Source:
Genealogical Research Maps of Hardin County Tennesse
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